Instructions for Using the Psychology “Participant Pool” Through the Website

**Fall 2009**

Faculty and advanced students who are conducting research with human participants and who are interested in using the Psychology Participant Pool may do so provided these guidelines are followed.

1. **ALL** research projects involving humans **MUST** first be reviewed and **APPROVED** by the Human Studies Council (HSC). This is a University committee that evaluates the ethical nature of each proposed study. **Failure to complete the review process will render you ineligible to utilize the participant pool as dictated by University and Federal Regulations.**

   You can obtain a copy of the appropriate forms from:

   A. Office of Sponsored Programs and Research Services, Davidson Hall, (860) 832-2365

   OR

   B. Access the following website:  [http://www.ccsu.edu/humanstudies](http://www.ccsu.edu/humanstudies)

   OR

   C. If you are enrolled in Psychology 222 (Research Methods II), Psychology 597 (Graduate Research), or a MA thesis graduate student, obtain the forms and follow the instructions of your professor/thesis advisor.

   D. Notes regarding consent forms:

   i. PLEASE STATE IN YOUR CONSENT FORM THAT STUDENTS MUST BE 18 OR OLDER OR THEY MUST PRESENT THE COMPLETED PARENTAL PERMISSION FORM TO PARTICIPATE. There is no need to restrict participation to students who are 18 or older. Underage students may participate, as long as they have parental consent (see attached form).

   Here is an example consent form statement: “My signature indicates that I am either 18 years of age or older, or that I have filed a parental consent form with my instructor.”

   ii. Please note that underage participants DO NOT need to show the signed parental consent form to every experimenter. They need only give it to their instructor.

2. After HSC approval, recruit participants:

   A. **Room Sign-ups:**

      • You may sign up to use a room for two time slots per day (i.e., one hour). Do not exceed this number, as many researchers need to use the rooms.

      • Do not sign up for a room more than two weeks in advance.

      • Specific instructions for room sign-ups are forthcoming
B. Using the Website (Sona Systems)

1. You must make a request to be added to the system as a researcher.
   • If you are a PSY 222 or 597 student, your instructor will add your name to the system.
   • If you are not in one of the classes listed above, please contact Dr. Rebecca Wood at woodre@ccsu.edu or 832-3106. She will add your information.
   • Once you are added to the system, you will receive an email from “Research Participation System” containing your username and password.

2. Once you have your username and password, go to http://ccsu.sona-systems.com and log onto the system.

   Once you log on, you will be on the “Research Participation System” page. From there you can edit information such as your password and email address. Just go to My Profile and edit as desired.

   Note: The My Profile menu has an option to receive reminders of your scheduled appointments, which you may find useful.

3. To add a new study, click on Add New Study

   There are several options here. Most students will select Standard Study.

   • Enter the study name, study description, your instructor (the “Principal Investigator” for the study), eligibility requirements (most researchers will have none), the HSC approval number and expiration data, etc., under Study Information.

   • Note: You MUST enter a valid HSC approval code for the study. You will not be able to post the study without one!

      • You must enter an end date for the HSC approval code. Please note that all HSC codes (even the ones from PSY 222 or 597 instructors) last for one year after they are received. Please make sure that the end date is THE LATEST POSSIBLE DATE for your study. If you do this, you will avoid problems logging onto Sona later in the semester when you want to change credits, etc.

      • Make sure you click “yes” by Approved and Active Study. If you do not do this, people will not be able to sign up for your study.

      • Your study description must follow these guidelines:

         • Provide a brief rationale for the study. Do not give too much detail, just the gist of the study. An example might be “You are being asked to participate in a study of college students’ Internet use”.

         • What will the participants do? Limit the description to actual tasks, for example, “Participants will complete a survey regarding Internet use. They will also provide information on their age and gender”.

• Indicate about how long the study might take. Be honest, and do not use phrases like, “Get your credits fast!” or “5-minute study!!”. Simply state the estimated time, for example, “the survey usually takes about 15 minutes, but some participants may require more time”.

• STATE THAT STUDENTS MUST BE 18 OR OLDER OR THEY MUST PRESENT THE COMPLETED PARENTAL PERMISSION FORM TO PARTICIPATE.

• Include the following statement: “Students who have selected the “BARCS only” course MAY NOT sign up for this study.” The reason for including this statement is that students who have selected the “BARCS only” course are participating in a particular study for which they cannot receive course credit.

• Include your contact information.

• Do not mention incentives like “Free candy!”.

Once you have completed the steps outlined above, scroll down to “Advanced Settings” and find Participant Sign-Up Deadline. The default is 24 hours in advance, but you can specify your own deadline for sign-ups.

• Hint: When you add your study, you might want to scroll down to “Advanced Settings” and select the option, Should researcher receive email when a participant signs up or cancels?

• After you add a study, you will see a summary window that will indicate that your study has been added. You should view your study information to make sure it is correct. If it isn’t, scroll down and select Change Study Information. Edit information as needed.

4. Add time slots

• Log onto the Sona Systems website and go to My Studies.

• Once in the My Studies window, click on Timeslots.

• You can add one timeslot at a time, or multiple slots.

• To add multiple timeslots, just choose Add Multiple Timeslots and indicate the number of slots you want to add for a particular day. Specify how long you want slots to last, and how many minutes you would like between timeslots.

• Indicate the room in which the study will take place. You need to enter a room number (i.e., “location”) for each time slot.

• Hint: A quick way to add slots is to copy time slots you have already created and modify accordingly. You can do this from the Add Multiple Timeslots page.

5. Assign credit to your participants

• When you run your sessions, be sure to keep track of the participants who do show up so you can award proper credit. My Studies will allow you to see who has signed up for your sessions. Double-check this as your participants arrive. Only participants who have signed up through the website will appear in this database. Only give credit to those who actually show up. Participants are penalized one unit for not attending, provided they have not cancelled by 5:00 p.m. the day before your session.
• After you finish each session, you **must** award credit/penalties to your participants **immediately**. Here’s how:

  • Log onto the Sona Systems website. You’ll immediately see the **Research Participation** page.

  • Go to **My Studies** and click on your study.

  • Click on **View/Administer Time Slots**. You will see a list of participants who are awaiting assignment of credits or penalties.

  • Click **Modify**

  • Under **Sign-Ups**, assign credits/penalties as appropriate

  • Click **Update Sign-Ups**. Once you do this, you’ll see an updated list of participants with their status (e.g., “Credit Granted”) beside their names.

  • Make sure the number of credits you assign is correct. If you make a mistake you can easily change it by repeating this process. It would be unethical to take away credit that has already been assigned and posted.

  • It is **imperative** that you apply credit **on the day you collect data**. Failure to do so 1) will preclude future use of the participant pool; and 2) if you are a student, will be reported to your **Research Methods Professor or Faculty Advisor**. Even if you are collecting data on several days, you must apply credit at the conclusion of each day. If you have questions talk with your professor, Dr. Horowitz, Dr. Wood, or the graduate assistant in charge of recording participant pool activities (Phone: 860-832-2221, Office: 0100300 Barnard Hall).

  • **Note to students**: If you do not assign credit within two days, you will receive the following message via email:

    “This email is to notify you that you have 1 study timeslot(s) more than 2 days old that await your response. More information can be found by logging onto the site: [http://ccsu.sona-systems.com](http://ccsu.sona-systems.com)”

    The Sona System administrator will also receive the message, and will forward it to your instructor.

C. **Deadline**

    All studies must be completed and all credits/penalties submitted by **Monday, December 7 at 3:00 pm**. It is **imperative** that all credits/penalties be submitted by this time.

D. **Important Notes to Students**

    1. **Only faculty and graduate students are permitted to run online surveys. If you plan to run an online study, please inform Dr. Horowitz or Dr. Wood.**

    2. If you are planning to conduct a study **AND** participate in studies using the Sona Systems site, please contact Dr. Wood at [woodre@ccsu.edu](mailto:woodre@ccsu.edu) or 832-3106 for additional instructions.