

Information for Researchers
September 2019

Preamble

Research is at the heart of the Department of Psychology's mission. The Psychology participant pool is an essential and valuable component of the Department's teaching and research. The advancement of psychology depends on the participation of investigators, research assistants, and human participants. We invite undergraduates to become involved in Departmental research in one or more of these roles: by volunteering to be a research participant, working in a research laboratory as a paid or volunteer research assistant, or enrolling in an independent research course. By volunteering, undergraduate students can make a contribution to basic knowledge in psychology and human nature, learn more about Departmental research and how it is conducted, as well as earn extra credits in their courses.

Overview

The Psychology Participant Pool consists of students enrolled in PSYC100 and eligible PSYC 200-level courses. Instructors for the 200-level courses decide on an individual basis whether or not to offer extra credits for research participation in their courses. Researchers will award credit for their studies on SONA which tracks student participation, and we provide instructors a report of credit completion for their students at the end of the term. To make the compensation consistent with university participant pools across Canada, students receive 0.5% towards their final course mark in one eligible course for every half hour of research completed. For PSYC100, the maximum number of credits is 5%. For the PSYC 200-level courses, individual instructors decide the amount of credit allowed for their course anywhere from 2-5%. Research credits will not be applied to failing grades (i.e., cannot be used to improve a failing mark to a pass). If students are enrolled in more than one 200-level course, they can complete studies toward each course. However, the same hours of research participation cannot be applied to more than one course. When students sign up for a study, they will designate the course toward which their participation is to be credited. Researchers must have ethics approval for all studies that use the participant pool including prescreening questionnaires, and study debriefings must conform to the pedagogical guidelines for participant pool use. Researchers must request access to the pool by completing the Department of Psychology Participant Pool Online Application Form (https://queensu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_24cFpJ4UIk2YaQR). Researchers cannot compensate participants more than 2% credit for a given study, but the 2% course credit can be combined with other means of compensation for studies that require more than 2 hours of participation. In the application, researchers will specify if they will be recruiting from PSYC100 only, PSYC 200-level only, or both. Researchers who *do not use deception* in their experiments are particularly encouraged to use the PSYC 200-level participant pool.

Using SONA

If you do not already have an account, you will receive an email from the SONA administrator when your study is approved by the participant pool officer. Then to log onto SONA, follow the instructions at 1:09 of the SONA instructional video: [//youtu.be/ec8S3xfO-a8](https://youtu.be/ec8S3xfO-a8). To learn how to add a study, go to 3:51 of the instructional video (specifics about online studies start at 4:32 and also see 12:17). From the list provided on SONA, researchers must select the courses for which students can get credit for their study (for more details, go to 11:20 of the video or <https://youtu.be/ec8S3xfO-a8?t=11m20s>). So if recruiting only PSYC100 students, the researcher would choose only PSYC 100 from the list. Note: If a researcher restricts to PSYC 100 only, but a student is retaking PSYC100 while also enrolled in a participating PSYC200-level course, he/she will appear as eligible for the study. Students have to be enrolled in only one of the eligible courses to participate in a study. Researchers who *do not use deception* in their experiments are particularly encouraged to use the PSYC 200-level participant pool.

***NEW* [as of September 2019] Integrating an Online Qualtrics Study with SONA For Automatic Crediting.**

[CLICK HERE](#) for instructions on how to integrate your Qualtrics Survey with SONA

Alternative Assignment

Students using the participant pool have the option of completing an alternative assignment instead of participating in research for course credit.

**IMPORTANT: Each lab is required to have an approved alternate assignment.* When a researcher submits/renews a study, they must list the approved alternate assignment from their lab. Students wanting to complete the alternate assignment will contact the researcher listed on SONA for the specific study. The PI will be responsible for administering the assignment and providing credit (not the course instructor/participant pool officer).*

Options

Labs have two options for the alternative assignment, both of which must be completed to the researcher's satisfaction.

1) For the **paper option** researchers can have students a) read a short journal article, commentary, blog post, etc. b) watch a short video, or c) listen to a short podcast. The material should be related to research in your lab and should require approximately 10-15 minutes for reading, watching, or listening. Students will then be required to answer questions about what they read, watched, or heard. These questions should be prepared in advance and provided in written form to the students. Researchers should choose a set of questions that require approximately 5-10 minutes to answer in total. Thus, altogether the paper alternative assignment should take between 20-30 minutes to complete. Several

examples are available, but researchers should find their own articles and adapt the questions or develop their own questions.

2) For the **walk through**, labs have two options. A researcher can *have students go through a 20-minute version* of a representative study but without collecting the students' data. To ensure that the simulation takes 20 minutes, especially if being done online, we encourage researchers to a) set timers on their pages, so students cannot proceed until a certain amount of time has passed, and b) periodically provide questions that the students must answer correctly or be directed back to the relevant part of the simulation to go through it again until they get the question right. Alternatively, researchers can *verbally walk students through the procedure*. One example is available here: https://www.queensu.ca/psychology/sites/webpublish.queensu.ca.psycwww/files/files/Participant%20Pool/Alternative_Assignment_Walk_Through_Example.pdf. For the latter, it also may be difficult to reach the 20-minute minimum. However, here are a few strategies researchers can employ. a) Periodically ask the students questions about what you just told them or what they think might happen next. For example, have students speculate about how they would have responded, or ask them why they think different choices were made in the research design. b) In studies using equipment other than computers (e.g., eye tracking, physiological measurement devices), explain how the equipment works, what options you had to consider in setting it up (e.g., how far the eye tracker is placed from the screen), how you calibrate it, etc.

Duration. The alternate exercise should take between 20-30 minutes because students will receive only 0.5 credit per alternative assignment regardless of the length of the actual study. If researchers' alternative assignments are too short, they will undermine their own data collection as well as their colleagues' because students are highly likely to opt for a 5-minute assignment that yields 0.5 credit rather than participating in the researcher's study or someone else's.

Frequency. Students can get credit for doing the alternative assignment for a particular study only one time. The PI/delegate should credit the alternative assignment within their study account on SONA (just give 0.5 credit instead of the usual study credit value and add a comment that the student completed the alternative assignment). Then students can't sign up for a given study's alternative assignment more than once or do both the study and its alternative. Furthermore, starting this year, SONA records will be retained for 3-4 years, so those students won't be able to do the study or its alternative if they are part of the pool as PSYC 200-level students in subsequent years.

Scheduling. Students will need to contact the PI in advance to set up an appointment to complete the assignment. The PI or their delegate may either schedule one student at a time or wait until several students have requested the alternative assignment to then

schedule as a group. However, these appointments must be completed before the end of each semester that researchers run their study especially because the students in PSYC 200-level courses need to be credited before the end of the term. We suggest offering at least 1 alternative assignment session each month. Each lab should be prepared to offer the alternative assignment until the end of the term in which you have studies.

SONA Prescreening

In addition to the regular prescreening, four prescreening items have been added to SONA that researchers can use to recruit participants, or restrict access to their studies. These items currently assess gender, ethnicity, corrected vision, and native language. To learn more about how to use SONA prescreening go to 15:57 of the video or <https://youtu.be/ec8S3xfO-a8?t=15m57s>.