

RP Pool Guidelines for Researchers | Spring 2020

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The RP Pool will open for data collection on **Monday, January 13th, 2020**.
The RP Pool officially closes on **Friday, April 24th, 2020**.

This document provides general guidelines for the research participant pool (“RP pool”), including rules and regulations that researchers must follow in order to promote fair and equitable use of the RP pool for everyone in the department. For more information on how to post studies or troubleshoot problems with Sona, you should check the Sona documentation on the UGA Psychology Department website (www.uga.edu/psychology) or you can email the RP Coordinator with specific questions at rp@uga.edu.

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General Information

In order to have access to the RP Pool, you must either be:

- 1) A faculty member or graduate student in the psychology or sociology departments who is in good standing with the department,
OR
- 2) A faculty member outside of these departments who is in active collaboration with a faculty member of the psychology or sociology department. Prior collaborations with faculty members in the psychology or sociology departments do not merit access to the RP Pool.

Research participants may be obtained from students enrolled in Elementary Psychology (PSYC 1101), General Psychology (PSYC 1030H), Psychology of Adjustment (PSYC 2101), and Social Psychology in the Sociology department (SOCI 3730). (The particular composition of the RP Pool may vary from semester to semester, but these are generally the courses that comprise the pool.)

Research participation by these students is intended to be a learning experience. The students' research orientation requirement (whether it be participation in research or summarizing research articles) is basically the equivalent of a lab section in a physics course, for example—it is intended to familiarize the students with current research topics and techniques.

Because many researchers depend on this source for research participants, all users of the system **must** treat research participants with courtesy and consideration. Care should also be taken to ensure that the students' participation is a learning experience. **Investigators who fail to observe the guidelines described in this document may be denied access to the RP Pool.**

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Requisition

Prior to running any research participants, prospective investigators must

- (a) Receive approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB). If you need an application for IRB approval, you can obtain one through their web page at: <http://www.ovpr.uga.edu/docs/forms/compliance/NEW-IRB-Application.doc>
- (b) Set up your experiment on Sona Systems. Once you get done it will ask you to send a request to activate the study--be sure to send this request in order to activate your study.
- (c) Included in this request, make sure to forward me an email indicating IRB approval. You will receive verification of your approval from me once you have forwarded this information.

Research Experience Requirement

All students in Psychology 1101, 1030H, and Sociology 3730 are required to participate between 4.5 and 6.5 research credit hours to receive a class grade.

Students receive .5 credits for the prescreen survey on SONA. Responses to this screener may be used by faculty to filter or target participants based on demographic information. The following participant characteristics are currently screened, as of January 2020: age, gender, sex, ethnicity, sexual orientation, marital status, type of area raised in (e.g., rural, etc.), and political orientation.

(Students are NOT required to participate in psychology studies. Alternatively, they may choose to summarize research articles. Each article summary is worth 1 hour of credit and should be at least 2 pages in length. A student may also turn in only one 1-page summary if a .5 credit is needed. If a student chooses to do such a summary, he or she must clearly indicate on the top of the article that it is for .5 credits.)

NOTE: Students can complete up to 3 hours of credit with online studies. This 3 hours includes the .5 hours corresponding to the prescreen survey on SONA.

Please observe the following guidelines:

- Inducements may **not** be posted on the experimental listing (e.g., "This experiment takes only 15 MINUTES" or "Fun, Fun, Fun"). In addition, the RP Committee has decided that students may not receive both course credit and monetary compensation for participation in the same study. In addition, lotteries are not permitted (see below). This is seen as an extra inducement, and would give unfair advantage to one study over all the others. The RP Pool was established to give all researchers equal access to research participants.
- Post sessions 4-5 days in advance of when you require research participants. Research participants are often willing to participate in studies scheduled for evenings or weekends. The doors of the Psychology Building are open until 6:00 PM on weekdays. If

you plan to run later than 6:00 PM or on weekends, you or your assistant must meet the research participants at the door and let them in. **Departmental policy forbids propping the doors open.**

- If for any reason you cannot keep your appointment with a research participant, it is your responsibility to contact him or her **at least 24 hours in advance**. If you are unable to contact the research participant, **award him or her credit on the schedule**. The research participant is still eligible to participate in your study and receive another credit, which you would then award through the timeslot modify option on Sona.
- Researchers must award credit on a regular basis throughout the semester. Every two weeks, researchers must grant credit for participants in their studies. It can be stressful for students to have pending credit for extended periods of time. In order to make the process as accommodating as possible for the students, we are requiring that researchers regularly grant credit. Failure to do so will result in revocation of RP Pool privileges until the situation is corrected.
- Researchers using the RP Pool are **not** allowed to go into PSYC 1101, 1030H, or SOCI 3730 classes to recruit participants for research projects, even if the instructor has agreed to let you do so. The **only** form of recruitment allowed is the sign-up procedure on the website. This ensures that everyone has equal access to the RP Pool.
- Participants have the option of not participating in a study or terminating participation at any point during the session. If a participant refuses to participate, give the participants the full amount of credit for participating in the study (or for participating in the first session for multi-part studies). Participants should not be penalized in any way for deciding not to participate in a study. For example, if a student shows up for a 1.0 credit study, reads the consent form, and subsequently decides that he or she does not want to participate (or signs the consent form and later changes his or her mind), the student still should receive the full amount of 1.0 credit.
- Regarding the number of credits that participants receive for participating in a study, participants should always receive at least the amount they signed up for. It is the responsibility of the researcher to provide a reasonably accurate estimate of how long studies will take for participants to complete on average. If participants end up taking longer than what they signed up for, the credit should be adjusted accordingly. For example, if a study is worth 2.0 credits, but a participant takes 2 hours and 15 minutes to complete the study, he or she should receive 2.5 credits. This adjustment can be easily made for each individual on your schedule (changing it for one person will not affect the entire list).
- Psychology faculty and graduate students are allowed to have accounts on the Sona Systems website. To request an account, email the RP Coordinator (RP@uga.edu) with the name and email to be associated with the account. Undergraduate research assistants are not permitted to have researcher accounts on the Sona Systems website. Usually, the best option is for a researcher to create a Lab login that will be used for many researchers and attached to many studies. The login and password would be lab-specific and would be what undergraduate research assistants use to post study times, credit participants, etc.

- Credits should only be granted to participants who fulfilled the study requirements. For example, if participants only participate in Part 1 of a study *and not Part 2*, they only receive credit for their participation in Part 1.
- **In order to maintain the RP Pool as a common good for researchers, there will be use restrictions as follows: No single study may use more than 10% of the pool's available participant hours and no single lab may use more than 20% of the pool's available participant hours. The RP Pool Committee will monitor participant hour usage and notify the appropriate researchers if/when these limitations are reached. The RP Pool Committee reserves the right to suspend any study or lab's use of the RP Pool at any time in order to ensure all researchers have access to participants.**

Use of Lotteries

Although IRB sometimes approves the use of lotteries in experimental research, users of the RP Pool may not use lotteries because the RP Committee believes that such use violates the notion of equal access to research participants by all users of the RP Pool. You may not allow your participants to "gamble" with their RP credits.

Online Studies

In order to ensure equal access to the participant pool, participants are only allowed to complete 3 hours of online studies. After they reach their 3 hour maximum, they must participate in studies that take place in person in the psychology building or other locations.

Additionally, researchers are prohibited from creating a traditional study and emailing participants links to complete the study.

NOTE: This 3 hour maximum includes the .5 hours corresponding to the prescreen survey on SONA.

Investigators who fail to observe the guidelines described in this document may be denied access to the RP Pool.

Record of Participation

1. If a research participant fails to show up, this is called an "unexcused no-show." Turning in no-shows is **not** left to the discretion of the researcher; it is **required**. A research participant who fails to keep an appointment has credit deducted from his or her total.

Research participants who arrive late are generally given an excused no-show, but they are not given credit either.

2. Each research participant is entitled to one half-credit (0.5) for each half-hour or part of a half-hour of participation. For example, if your study takes 20 minutes,

the research participant receives one half-credit. If your study takes 75 minutes, the research participant receives 1.5 credits. **You may not give extra credits (e.g., 3 credits for 2 hours) as an inducement to get students to participate in a study.**

3. Award your credits on a regular basis, preferably at least once a week (or every time you view your schedule). **All credit submissions are due by 5:00 PM on the last day of the pool. Researchers who turn in credit submissions late or run studies while the RP pool is closed may lose their RP pool privileges for the next semester.**

Consent Forms

Each research participant must sign a legally effective informed consent statement that has been approved by IRB **before** participating in a study.

Debriefing

All research participants are to be provided with a clear post-study debriefing. This must constitute a learning experience for the research participant. This usually consists of a full explanation of everything that happened during the session, what was being studied, and a summary of your hypotheses. Phrasing of the presentation must be in the manner understandable to the student, and questions should be encouraged and answered.

If deception was used in the study, you must explain three things to the participants: 1) what you did not tell them, 2) why you did not tell it to them, and 3) what your hypotheses/predictions are.

Cancellation

Students may cancel their appointments without penalty by logging onto the web site **at least 24 hours in advance** of the appointment. In cases where the cancellation is received less than 24 hours in advance, the system will not allow the participant to cancel. For such emergencies, the participant will contact the Investigator directly to cancel the appointment.

In general, unexcused no-shows should only be given in extreme circumstances. If participants make a reasonable attempt to contact the Investigator in advance of the study, the participant should be given an excused no-show and allowed to sign up again at a later date. If participants fail to show up at all or do not contact the researcher, an unexcused no-show is appropriate.

If a researcher must cancel an appointment more than 24 hours in advance this can be done easily in Sona. **This should not happen often, but if a researcher has to cancel appointment times within 24 hours, participants should be awarded credit for the study automatically. The RP Pool Committee reserves the right to restrict RP Pool usage if a researcher is routinely cancelling credits within the 24 hour window.**

Information about the RP website

Both researchers and students will access the RP Pool through the following site:
<http://uga.sona-systems.com>

There is a document on the [Psychology Department website](#) on how to use the Sona Systems website. Check this document for extra information on how to post and administer studies and how to troubleshoot issues.

What students must do

1. Students will be asked to register themselves into the RP website at the beginning of the Semester. Once registered, they will be able to sign up for studies and view their credit listings at any time. Students will sign up for experimental sessions exclusively on this site.
2. When logged on, RPs will first see a list of active studies. Each study listing appears on a separate line containing the study number, the supervisor, the experimenter, phone number, eligibility restrictions, and study title. An icon on the left indicates if times are available for sign-ups.
3. By clicking this icon, the student sees a list of sessions for the given experiment. The student signs up by simply choosing a time and clicking the icon for that time.
4. The student then receives immediate confirmation of their appointment via e-mail and an e-mail reminder 24 hours before the appointment. RPs can only sign up for a particular study once, unless multiple sessions are required or the researcher allows them to sign up more than once.

Cancellations follow the same procedure as sign-ups: a RP finds his or her individual session in the list of sessions for a specific study, and cancels by clicking the “Cancel” icon. The system will not allow a RP to cancel within 24 hours of his or her session. The only way a RP can cancel within this time period is to contact the experimenter associated with the study, who then can cancel them manually.

What researchers must do

To post an experiment, check the schedule, or award credits, researchers should:

1. Enter the website listed above.
2. You will be asked for a User ID and Password. If you do not have a User ID or Password, e-mail the RP coordinator at RP@uga.edu and the RP Coordinator will provide you with this information.
3. When you go to the front page of the site (the login page), you may see a link to request an account. This form is only for participants. Do not use this form to request an account, as participant accounts have an entirely different set of privileges, and the privileges are not appropriate for a researcher.

Grading

As of Spring 2020, the following policy is strictly enforced:

Students who fail to satisfy their research requirement by the participation deadline (Friday, April 24, 2020 for the Spring 2020 semester) will be penalized one full letter grade in the relevant course.

For example, if a student enrolled in PSYC 1101 earned an A- in the course, but failed to satisfy their research requirement by the posted deadline, their final grade in the course would be a B-.

No incompletes will be assigned. Any extenuating circumstances should be discussed with the course instructor.

Questions about these policies may be directed to Michael Snell (rp@uga.edu) or Dr. Keith Campbell (wkc@uga.edu) in the Department of Psychology.