

**Research Participation Pool  
University of North Texas  
Policies**

**YOU MUST BE AT LEAST 18 YEARS OLD TO USE THE SONA SYSTEM**

**RATIONALE:** Psychology is a science. The principles that students learn from textbooks and in psychology courses were derived from scientific research studies. To enhance the students' understanding of the research process in psychology, they are required to satisfy a research component as a part of General Psychology I (1630). The research component of the course will involve the participation in research-related pedagogy during the semester in which the student is enrolled in PSYC 1630.

**DATES:** The Research Participation Pool (RPP) will be effective for inclusive dates in each semester that it is a course requirement. No participation can begin before the *start* date of the semester and no credit will be given for participation after the *end* date of the semester. This policy is intended to allow the RPP Coordinator and associated personnel sufficient time to manage the Pool logistics at beginning and end of semesters. Participants must not participate before or after the designated dates, and Researchers must not arrange data collection sessions at any time outside of the designated dates. The inclusive dates for the RPP will be included in the syllabus of each section of the course and will be posted on the registration material and other RPP documents. Generally, participation will begin on the second Tuesday of each long semester and will end on the Wednesday of pre-finals week. SONA is not in use over the summer semesters.

**REQUIREMENTS:** Students are required to earn ten (**10**) research credits. Students may earn credit by any of the following means, in any combination: 1) The student may volunteer to serve as a research participant in an approved study being conducted by University of North Texas psychology faculty or students. The Institutional Review Board of the University of North Texas will have approved all studies offered through the RPP. Only participation in approved studies will be accepted for RPP credit. 2) The student may complete a written research summary of a published article from an approved psychology journal. All students attempting to fulfill the research component will have to register and request an account through the RPP Experiment Management System (EMS; unt.sona-systems.com).

**Credits for research participation:** Credits for research participation are determined by the time and effort students are asked to expend, not on the particular outcome of their participation in a study. Credits will be determined in advance by the researcher and posted for the student's information. Only credits for which the student registers online may be used for research requirement credit. Credit will be assigned according to the following guidelines:

- At least one (1) credit will be earned for each half (½) hour of participation at a single session.
- If more than one session is required, the student will earn at least one (1) credit for each session.
- One (1) credit can also be earned for special circumstances for any research project. Special circumstances include multi-session participation, recruitment of a cohort, activities performed outside of a formal research session, etc.

**Credits for written research summaries:** Four (4) credits will be earned for each satisfactorily completed article summary.

**Failure to complete requirements:** Failure to meet the research requirements will result in a 10% reduction in the final course grade. For example, if a student's final course grade is 90% that would be lowered to 80%. The student's grade would drop from an A to a B.

**Resolving Discrepancies:** If, for some reason, there is a discrepancy between the number of credits recorded by the RPP EMS and the number of credits recorded by the student, the student should contact the RPP Coordinator as soon as possible in order to resolve the difference. The student should retain record slips from each research session in order to verify participation. Any discrepancies must be resolved before the course instructor submits grades.

**Other uses of the RPP:**

Other courses in the department of psychology may, by the instructor's decision, include a research requirement. These requirements may be satisfied by participation in the RPP. To do so, an instructor (in a course other than PSYC 1630) needs only to notify the RP Coordinator so that the course may be added to the EMS. The number of required credits may vary depending on the instructor, but all other requirements and policies apply to students in these courses.

The RPP may also be used as an extra credit vehicle. Instructors in courses wishing to use research participation as a means of extra credit also need to inform the RPP Coordinator at the beginning of each semester. All of the rules and regulations for using

the site for extra credit are the same as those for required credits, with the exception of the “Failure to complete requirements” section.

## **GUIDELINES FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS**

### **Finding a research study in which to participate and signing-up:**

Information about opportunities to participate in research studies will be posted on the EMS website. Students must request a user account at the EMS website (unt.sona-systems.com). Students may then logon to the website to view timeslots for available research. Information on the website will describe the research study, specify the qualifications for volunteering (such as only seniors, college athletes, etc.), the nature of the research, the number of credits offered, the approximate length of time it will take to participate, and the researcher and faculty sponsor of the research.

Once a student has decided to participate in a particular study, the student will sign-up for the study by clicking an available timeslot. An email is then sent to the student as a record of the sign-up. The researcher may either post predetermined time slots from which students may choose or may contact students with available times. **Students MAY NOT sign up for a study more than once, unless the study description explicitly states they may do so. Students will NOT receive credit for redundant participation.**

Notices of research opportunities will be posted during the course of the semester as the researchers become prepared to conduct the studies. Therefore, students should expect that there would be fewer offerings at the start and at the end of the semesters. If there are not enough research studies available, or research opportunities are not available when a student can participate, the student may write research summaries to earn their required credits, or propose an equivalent alternative.

### **Showing-up and participating in the study:**

If a student signs-up to participate in a study, the student is asked to show-up on time and be prepared to stay for the posted length of time. If the student is late (even by a few minutes), the study may have begun and the student will not be permitted to enter the research session. If this should occur, it is the student’s responsibility to contact the researcher (after the conclusion of the research session).

Information about each current research study will be posted on the EMS website. Information for each study includes the title, time, location, number of credits offered, and researchers’ contact information. Students may consult website if they need to contact the experimenter or find when research sessions will take place.

### **Cancellation:**

If it becomes necessary for the student to cancel participation because of unforeseen circumstances, the student should contact the researcher as soon as possible, so that another participant may be scheduled. Students should call or e-mail the researcher at the phone number or e-mail address posted on the website. Students also have ability to cancel a session through the EMS website. Students can review studies for which they have signed-up. Students can then cancel the session by clicking a button on this page.

### **Credit for participation:**

After participation in a study, the researcher will record the students’ credit on the EMS website. Students may check their credits against this posting and immediately report discrepancies to the RPP Coordinator. The RPP Coordinator will resolve the discrepancy by consulting the student and researchers involved. The decision of the RPP Coordinator will be final.

### **Complaints:**

In the advent that a researcher fails to attend a session, that a student believes he has been treated unfairly by a researcher, or that the participants have concerns about any aspect of research participation, the student may submit an official complaint to the RPP Coordinator. The Participant Complaint Forms are available from the RPP Coordinator or online at [www.psyc.unt.edu](http://www.psyc.unt.edu) Complaint forms must be submitted in original handwriting and signed by the student. In the event that a researcher is absent from a group participation session, only one student needs to submit a complaint form.

### **Important Information:**

It is critical that, if necessary, a student cancels within the time frame specified on the experimental site. If this is not done, the student will be assessed a “Failure to Appear” for the study. If a student collects 3 such penalties, s/he will be permanently prohibited from using the SONA site, and can only obtain research credits from completing summaries.

It is possible that a student may be unable to cancel a session in the appropriate time. If this occurs, and the student has a valid, documented, (e.g., hospital admission papers) excuse, this should be presented to the SONA TA as soon as possible. Documented excuses are only valid for the current semester.

## GUIDELINES FOR RESEARCHERS

The following guidelines are in place to protect the rights of the participants and must be strictly followed by each researcher using the RPP. *Deviations from these guidelines may result in suspension of RPP privileges for the offending researcher and/or the researcher's supervisor.* The RPP Coordinator will correct some minor violations of the guidelines. In such cases, the researcher will be notified. Repeated violations will result in written warnings to the researcher. Accumulation of warnings on the part of a researcher will result in suspension of RPP privileges. Suspension of a researcher is at the discretion of the RPP Coordinator.

### **Before collecting data:**

1. All studies must include a SONA form when submitted to the IRB for approval.
2. Once IRB approval is secured, the researcher must submit a copy of the approval letter to the RPP Coordinator. When the letter and application is submitted, the RPP Coordinator will assign the researcher an experiment number. The researcher will use this number for the duration of the approval period. If the IRB protocol changes, the researcher must submit the new letter and receive a new experiment number. The experiment number is used on all RPP Forms including the EMS website.
3. The RPP Coordinator will establish a user account at which the Researcher may post timeslots for each study.
4. Specifics of the EMS website use are available for the RPP Coordinator
5. Each researcher must read and follow ALL of the RPP Policies.
6. Researchers should determine how much time their study takes. Pilot testing may be needed to determine how long it takes the average participant to complete a study. Participants from the RPP may not be used for pilot testing. For each ½ hour of participation, participants are awarded one (1) credit. Researchers will report the duration of their studies to the RPP Coordinator who will, in turn assign the appropriate number of credits.
7. The research should notify the RPP Coordinator of any restrictions to participation. Restrictions can be included in the pretest required of each participant when the participant establishes an account of the EMS website.
8. Complete the Study Description page on the EMS website to advertise your study and recruit participants. The researcher must complete all information in the Study Description. The researcher can then add timeslots for the study. If there are no restrictions for participation, the researcher must indicate as much on the sign-up sheet. No incentive statements (such as “fun experiment” or “only takes 20 minutes”) may be included on the EMS website.
9. After sign-ups are posted, the researcher should monitor the EMS website daily to determine whether you are successfully recruiting participants.

### **During and after the data collection session:**

1. Researchers must give participant the informed consent form (if applicable) to sign and offer them one to keep, as well.
2. Researchers must retain a list of all participants.
3. Researchers will immediately after the study (or at the first convenient opportunity), log-on the EMS website and grant credit to the participant(s). Credits will be inspected weekly to be sure the researchers are updating the EMS records. Failure to promptly record credit is considered a violation of RPP policy.

### **Researcher cancellation:**

1. If a researcher must cancel or reschedule a session, the researcher or appointed agent must notify the participant(s) as soon as possible. Notification can be completed through the EMS website. Cancellation must be made 24 hours in advance of the scheduled session. If a cancellation is made within 24 hours of the research session, participants are entitled to credit for the session.
2. If the cancellation is made within 24 hours of the scheduled session, the researcher or appointed agent must complete a **cancellation form**. This form is available from the RPP Coordinator.
3. The cancellation form should then be posted on the door of the room where the research session was to take place.
4. Students will put their names on the form as they arrive at the session. The researcher will remove the form and submit it to the RPP Coordinator. There should be enough spaces posted in order to allow each participant that signed-up to put his name. The form must be collect as soon as possible.
5. The researcher may also want to notify the RPP Coordinator.
6. Researchers may also attempt to contact participants before the session to reschedule the session (if possible) instead of canceling the session.

## **RESEARCH PARTICIPATION COORDINATOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

The RP Coordinator is the authority for all procedures associated with research participation. The specific responsibilities of the RP Coordinator in facilitating research participation are listed here.

1. Assign experiment numbers to researchers.
2. Maintain user accounts and study information on the EMS website (<http://unt.sona-systems.com>)
3. Distribute forms to researchers and students. All RPP forms will be available in hard copy from the RPP Coordinator. In addition, all forms are available online at [www.psyc.unt.edu](http://www.psyc.unt.edu) The RP Coordinator will maintain the website for the RPP.
4. When a student receives a grade of 'I' in a course due to a failure to complete research requirement, the RPP Coordinator will supervise the completion of the grade. Once the student completes the required research credits, the RPP Coordinator will submit a grade change form to the student's course instructor.
5. At the beginning of each semester, the RPP Coordinator will attend each course in the RPP to inform the students of the requirements and procedures for research participation.

## **INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUMMARY OF JOURNAL ARTICLE**

**NOTICE:** Journal article summaries must not be *plagiarized*. Plagiarism is a form of cheating. If a student is suspected of plagiarism, the RPP Coordinator will investigate the manner. If it is established that the student plagiarized, a penalty will be assessed according to University policy, and the Center for Students' Rights and Responsibilities may be notified.

**Materials:** The student must select an article from a scholarly journal in psychology. Articles should meet the following criteria:

1. The articles should come from PRIMARY sources.
  - a. An acceptable article presents original research conducted by the author(s). The article should contain all the information necessary for a reader to replicate the research (e.g. how many participants were used, the materials or apparatus used, the statistical analysis) so that the study's scientific merit can be judged by the reader.
  - b. Acceptable articles should NOT be a second printing of the research in a review article, a book, a text, or some other summary form (This would be termed a secondary source).
  - c. Students must NOT use information from popular press books or magazine (NO Psychology Today articles).
2. The articles must have been refereed.
  - a. This means that experts in the field reviewed the article and found it to be (MOSTLY) free of false or misleading information and found the authors to have used appropriate methodological and statistical techniques, and to have drawn reasonable conclusions from the data.
  - b. The journals listed subsequently as ACCEPTABLE are refereed. If a student is unsure whether a journal is refereed, the journal should have a section entitled "Instructions to Authors" or something similar that discusses the criteria for accepting articles. It should say that the articles are refereed or reviewed. Do not use articles for which the only criterion for publication is that the author pays the journal. The student should ask instructors if you are unsure of source acceptability.
3. The following journals are psychological journals published in the U.S., which cover many topics within the discipline. All of them ARE acceptable sources for papers:

American Journal of Psychology, Behavior Therapy, Child Development, Cognitive Psychology, Developmental Psychology, Educational Psychology, Journal of Abnormal Psychology, Journal of Animal Behavior, Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, Journal of Applied Psychology, Journal of Comparative and Physiological Psychology, Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, Journal of Counseling Psychology, Journal of Educational Psychology, Journal of the Experimental Analysis of Behavior, Journal of Experimental Psychology, Journal of Personality, Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, Journal of Experimental Child Psychology, Journal of Experimental Psychology: General, Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Learning and Memory/Learning, Memory, and Cognition, Journal of Experimental Psychology: Animal Behavior Processes, Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, Journal of Psychology, Journal of Social Behavior and Personality, Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, Journal of Social Relationships, Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior, Memory and Cognition, Perception and Psychophysics, Perceptual and Motor Skills, and Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, Professional Psychology, Social Psychology Quarterly, Journal of Health Psychology.

4. Others may be acceptable. The student should obtain permission from the instructor or the RPP Coordinator for any journal not listed.

### **Writing the summary:**

All summaries must be typed written, be in prose (not outline form), and conform to proper grammar. Each summary should be 2-4 double-spaced pages. **The student must include a *photocopy* of the complete original journal article.**

Each summary must include the following information:

1. On a cover page or in the upper right-hand corner of the first page include: Student's name, student's id number, the course for which the student will get credit including the course number and section number, the day/time for the course, and the course instructor's name. This information is required in order to record credits.
2. Author(s), Date, Title of Article, Journal Name, Volume, Pages
3. Introduction: What basic question(s) were the researchers trying to answer? What was the general problem area? Why was the study being done, or why is the study important?
4. **Method:**
  - a. Describe the research participants.
  - b. What task did the participants perform, or what tests did they take, or what characteristic were observed or measured?
  - c. How were the data gathered? Naturalistic observation, participant observation, cross-sectional study, longitudinal study, survey, interview, archival, meta-analysis? (the student should include all that apply; and cite evidence to support the claim)
  - d. If it was an experimental or quasi-experimental design:
    - i. Were there different groups? If so, the student should describe what distinguishes them and how participants were assigned to groups.
    - ii. How was the independent variable manipulated? How was the dependent variable measured?
  - e. If the article was a correlational or descriptive design:
    - i. What variables were measured and how were they measured?
    - ii. Did one variable precede another in time?
5. **Results:**
  - a. What were the results of the study? (e.g. Did any groups differ, or were variables related?). Note: Students do NOT need to provide precise statistical data; it is more appropriate to give a summary.
  - b. Did the results support hypotheses (if any were given)?
6. **Discussion**
  - a. How are the results important (e.g. Can they be applied to solve social or individual problems, do they change the way other studies are interpreted, do they support one theory over another, do they summarize a diverse body of literature?)
  - b. What were any problems with the study identified?
  - c. What were the author(s) suggestions for future research?

### **Submitting the summaries:**

Summaries may be submitted at any point in the semester. Each semester, dates will be posted stating deadlines for summary submissions. The summaries are submitted in 316 Terrill Hall.