

Experimenter Orientation Packet: PSYC 103 Research Requirement

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How to use this manual

This manual is intended for members of the College of Charleston psychology department faculty only. At this time, only members of the department may gain access to the participant pool of PSYC 103 students. This manual explains how to follow the policies/procedures associated with the PSYC 103 research experience requirement and participant pool mechanisms.

The general flow of procedures require that you: (1) Prepare a journal article review as an alternative for PSYC 103 students who do not wish to participant in research; (2) Make an official request to use the participant pool mechanism; (3) Request the necessary password to use the web based experiment scheduling system; and (4) Use Sona Systems to post electronic sign-up sheets and to subsequently assign credits and penalties to participating students.

To facilitate your request to use the Participant Pool, a procedural checklist is provided below. Most of the procedures are self-explanatory and the necessary computer programs have help menus to assist you with each process. If you encounter a problem or need more information with a particular step, then you can consult the relevant section of this manual as needed.

For those of you who would like more detailed instructions, the following sections of this packet will provide experimenters with the necessary information to utilize and abide by the procedures of the participant pool. Efforts were taken to minimize the impact of the policies on researchers' workload. By making these procedures standard for all investigators, we sought to ensure an enriching (and consistent) research experience for each participating student.

The Psychology Department's Participant Pool Committee, under the charge of the voting faculty, authored these materials. This committee was folded into the Technology Committee as of August, 2013. Please direct any comments/suggestions or concerns to this committee:

Cindi May, mayc@cofc.edu, 953-6735

John Widholm, widholmj@cofc.edu, 953-8194

Thank you for supporting our teaching and training through the execution of your research!

Step-by-Step Checklist for Experimenters

IRB Approval

1. Obtain appropriate IRB approval for your experiment (if applicable). See http://www.org.cofc.edu/pub/compliance_irb_index.shtml

Find a Journal Article for an Alternative Assignment for Students

2. Select a short empirical article for the Technology Committee to use as an alternative assignment for students. Articles should be short (2-5 pages), and should be understandable to students at the introductory level. The journal *Psychological Science* often has appropriate material. Articles should include 1-2 studies, and they should be easily discernable to naïve readers. Course instructors also have the option to select their own articles, but experimenters must provide at least one article so that the onus for this alternative is not placed solely on instructors.
3. Download the Journal Review Form by going to http://psychology.cofc.edu/student-ops/research_requirement/experimenters.php and clicking on "Journal Review Form."
4. Complete and save the Journal Review Form for your article and be sure to provide answers to questions at a level appropriate for PSYC 103 students.
5. Email the following to the Technology Committee:
 - (a) a copy of the article
 - (b) a completed copy of the Journal Review Form (i.e., a KEY).

Setup the Experiment in Sona Systems

6. If you have not already received a logon and password, contact the Technology Committee.
7. Login at <http://cofc.sona-systems.com/>
8. Click "Add New Study"
9. Fill in all fields.

Note: You must enter an IRB approval number and expiration date. If your study does not require IRB approval (e.g., perhaps it's purely for pedagogical purposes, and the research will not be disseminated through articles, conferences, etc.), explain this in the IRB approval Code field. For example, you might type "N/A – PSYC 468 class research". If your study is purely for pedagogical purposes, please enter an expiration date around the end of the semester (e.g., 12/30/11 for the end of the fall semester). If your study requires IRB approval and is still under review at the IRB, it cannot be approved on Sona Systems.
10. In the credit box, be sure to indicate the correct number of credits your study is worth (1 credit if less than 30 minutes, 2 credits if 35-60 minutes, 3 credits if 65-90 minutes, etc.). If you are doing a web-based experiment, please error on the low side because of the extra convenience that web-based studies afford students.
11. When done, click "Add this Study" at the bottom.

_____12. If you entered the appropriate information, a screen will appear with summary information. *****Click "Send a Request." This will send an automated email to the Technology Committee requesting approval for your study to be posted online.*****

System Message: Study added.

Study Information	
Study Name	FakeStudy2
Abstract	asdfasdf
Description	adfasdfdsa
Duration	30 minutes
Credits	1 Credits
Researcher	Anthony Bishara Email: bisharaa@cofc.edu
Participant Sign-Up Deadline	24 hours before the study is to occur
Participant Cancellation Deadline	24 hours before the study is to occur
Study Status	Not visible to participants (not approved) - [Send a Request] to have this study approved Inactive study (does not appear on list of available studies)
IRB Approval Code	EXEMPT - PSYC 468 (expires December 31, 2011)

_____13. Add any comments and **click the button at the bottom of the page.**

Request Approval

Before participants can view this study, it must be approved by the appropriate person. You may make your request for approval using the form below. The email will be sent to bisharaa@cofc.edu, and information about the study will automatically be included in the email. You may enter any additional information in your request below.

Type any comments here.

Don't forget to press this button → **[Send Request]**

_____14. Please allow 1-2 business days for your study to be approved. You will receive an automated email confirming the approval.

Add Time Slots to Your Experiment

_____15. Go back to <http://cofc.sona-systems.com/>.

_____16. Click "My Studies"

_____17. Click "Time Slots" and follow the instructions to add timeslots.

Note: When you are asked to choose a location for your study, you are allowed to select from a drop-down list or to type in your own location. The drop-down list is only for shared research space, such as RHSC 133. Use the drop-down list if you want to make sure that no other researchers are conducting experiments in the same room at the same time. This drop-down list is only used to prevent two experiments at the same time; you must still check on your own to make sure that the room is not being used for something else (e.g., teaching).

Background and Rationale of Requirement

The psychology department at the College of Charleston has a research mission that includes the development and support of student laboratory classes, the sponsorship of student research (e.g., independent studies) and the professional development of faculty through independent research programs. In order to support a growing number of research activities, it became necessary to create a participant pool mechanism to ensure that a large number of research participants would be available on a consistent basis. Prior to the fall 2001 academic semester, the department relied on the request that PSYC 103 instructors encourage their students to volunteer for experiments in exchange for extra credit. This system was problematic for many reasons; the most important being that the student laboratory classes could not execute research projects due to a shortage of available participants.

As the result of a curriculum policy changes, PSYC 103 instructors now must require that their students participate in approximately **5 hours (= 10 credits)** of research conducted in the Psychology Department. At least **2** of the credits must be earned **prior to October 13 (Fall semester) or March 14 (Spring semester)**. In addition to earning their credits as a participant in research, students are offered an equitable alternative (see section III, The Journal Article Review as an Alternatives to Research Participation).

All instructors now recognize that the research experience is a course requirement for every section of PSYC 103. Please know that the development of this policy was not undertaken without careful consideration for the welfare of PSYC 103 students. Following the ethical principles for psychologists (6.14.b), a requirement must not represent a portion of a student's grade so large that "such an inducement might tend to coerce participation" (APA, 1994, p. 1609). Therefore, by a departmental vote, the research requirement for all sections of PSYC 103 will constitute exactly 5% of the student's total or final grade. This assigned weighting (5%) is intended to adhere to APA's ethical code and also facilitate the teaching and research mission of the department by ensuring sufficient incentive for student participation.

The Specific Requirement and Related Polices (e.g., penalties for missing appointments)

In order to fully satisfy the research experience requirement for this course (and earn points toward their final grade), **students must earn a total of 10 experimental credits. Students will earn 1 credit for each experiment in which they participate that is 30 minutes or less in length, and 2 credits for any study greater than 30 minutes.** For example, a 20-30 minute study will earn 1 credit, a 45-60 minute study will earn 2 credits, and so forth. Students must be sure to attend experiments for which they sign up or call to cancel ahead of time or they will be penalized (see below). Students who do not wish to participant in experiments can satisfy the requirement by completing reviews of 10 empirical journal articles.

1. Students who earn some credits but less than 10 will earn only a portion of the 5% toward their course grade (partial credit). For example, a student who earns 5 out of 10 credits would earn only 2.5% instead of the full 5%. More generally, partial credit can be calculated by taking the number of earned research credits, multiplying by 5, and then dividing by 10.

2. Students must earn two experimental credits prior to about 3/14 in Spring and 10/13 in Fall (that is, about half of the way through the course). The course instructor reserves the right to penalize students (i.e., deduct a portion of the five percent of their final grade) if they do not earn 2 credits prior to these deadlines. This penalty would be executed even if a student eventually earns ten credits, as 2 credits were not earned before the indicated deadline. *Note. Instructors are not required to factor research participation into students' midterm grades, instead they must simply keep a list of which students were on record as having participated prior to the semester deadline. Instructors are not obligated to penalize students; instructors retain the flexibility to use their discretion and take students' individual circumstances into account.*
3. Students may use the experiment scheduling web site <http://cofc.sona-systems.com/> to cancel an appointment. Cancellation deadlines vary from experiment to experiment, and students will see those deadlines on the website and also receive an email reminding them of the deadline.
4. Students who fail to show up for an experiment for which they are scheduled (without canceling) will be penalized 1 credit (approximately a half-hour) of research participation. Students who fail to show up for a second experiment for which they are scheduled will be penalized an additional 1 credit. Also, students who fail to show up for a second experiment will no longer be allowed to sign-up for additional studies and therefore must satisfy any remaining portion of the requirement by completing the journal review alternative.
6. Most experiments end just prior to the last week of class. There is no guarantee that experiments are available to accommodate research participation extremely late in the semester (e.g., the last week of classes or final exam week). Students who procrastinate in signing up for experiments run the risk of having to satisfy the requirement by completing the journal review alternative.

Note Regarding Undergraduate Students Choosing Journal Articles for Review: Students involved in research (either via lab classes or independent study) may be asked to provide articles as research alternatives so that they can fully appreciate the ethical and pragmatic considerations involved in conducting research. Access to the pool is viewed as a privilege and a responsibility, and it is imperative that student researchers who use the pool understand the necessity (i.e., ethical imperative) for providing alternative research experiences.

Note to Experimenters. This and other information about the research requirement for students can be viewed at any time at http://psychology.cofc.edu/student-ops/research_requirement/index.php.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who may request use of PSYC 103 students as potential research participants?

Only faculty members and psychology students under faculty supervision in the College of Charleston Psychology Department may utilize the participant pool. Because the PSYC 103 research requirement (**10 credits**) is modest, the size of the pool is modest and may wax and wane with enrollments. This policy is intended to avoid the over-use of the participant pool so that faculty investigators and their students will have a population of participants available for class-based and independent research projects.

Does the Technology Committee approve or sanction the offering of my research project to students?

No, the Technology Committee does not function to approve or regulate research projects. The Technology Committee develops policies and oversees procedures that relate to the operations of the PSYC 103 participant pool mechanism only.

I am a faculty member who wishes to use the participant pool for my own research project. I plan to conduct the project on my own, although I might get a student to help me gather and score data. In any case, the research is clearly faculty-driven. To whom do I go for a review of the project?

APA guidelines specify that you should have a research project reviewed by colleagues before you begin gathering data. The appropriate vehicle for reviewing faculty research, even if the research is minimal risk, is the College's IRB.

IRB review, however, is not necessary if the research project involves only minimal risk and is only a part of a student's coursework. The IRB agreed in February of 1994 that minimal risk research conducted by psychology majors as part of their coursework is exempt from IRB review under a federal regulation exempting "Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices...." This currently is interpreted to refer to laboratory coursework projects. Generally speaking, Independent Study and Bachelor's Essay projects are intended to contribute to the body of generalizable knowledge in the discipline, as well as constituting part of a student's coursework, and as such must be submitted for review by the IRB.

I am unsure whether my project fits the description of placing participants only at "minimal risk". What should I do? Whether you are a student or faculty member, any project that is not clearly a minimal risk project must be submitted to the College's IRB for a full review by colleagues. Whenever you are unsure about whether or not you need IRB approval, contact the IRB at 953-7421.

I want to test children outside of the College for a lab project. What should I do? The College of Charleston abides by federal regulations that require all investigators proposing research on vulnerable populations (adolescents, mentally handicapped adults, pregnant women, infants, homeless individuals, etc.) to submit a proposal to the College's Institutional Review Board (IRB) for review by its members. Additional information and forms are available from the College's Office of Sponsored Programs (953-7421); please note that the review process may take several weeks.

What if investigators outside of the College of Charleston ask to recruit participants from my PSYC 103 class?

Please explain that the use of participants from **PSYC 103** classes is reserved for laboratory courses and department faculty. Ask them to contact any member of the Technology Committee if they have additional concerns.

What if I am approached by investigators outside of the College asking to recruit my students as participants from courses other than PSYC 103?

Researchers not affiliated with the College of Charleston must have the permission of the College of Charleston's Institutional Review Board (IRB) to recruit participants (e.g., students, staff, and/or faculty) on campus. If they do not have such permission, you cannot to allow them to conduct research with your students. The Board of Trustees adopted this college-wide policy in Fall, 1999 (see <http://www.orga.cofc.edu>). Any external investigators must be able to provide written documentation that the College of Charleston IRB has reviewed their protocol and given permission to recruit subjects on campus. If the external investigator has such permission, then you may decide whether you would like to offer this research opportunity to students in your course(s). An up-to-date listing of approved studies involving on-campus recruitment of human participants by external researchers can be found at the web page of the Office of Research and Grants Administration (<http://www.orga.cofc.edu>).

Does imposing a research requirement constitute an unfair form of coercion?

No, not if we provide students with an equitable, non-experiment based alternative. This practice is consistent with the ethical principles for psychologists (APA, 1992). Furthermore, it is a practice common to many psychology departments across teaching and research institutions nationally.

Is it appropriate to base a portion of a student's grade on their willingness to participate as a research subject? If so, how should this be done?

Yes, this is the primary means of promoting and ensuring participation. Ethical principle 6.14b cautions that any research requirement (or equivalent experience) should not constitute such a large portion of their grade as to promote a form of coercion (APA, 1992). Therefore, the research requirement will represent no more than 5% of students' grade in the course. This is consistent with our current policy about providing extra-credit incentives. Extra credit must not exceed 5% so as to avoid undue pressure or coercion to participate in research.