

Information for Participants using the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh Department of Psychology Participant Pool

IMPORANT NOTE: It is strongly recommended that you print this document for your records if you plan to participate in the participant pool. It contains information about psychology studies, your rights as a participant, the participant pool, and the online participant sign-up system.

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Psychology Research

Faculty in the Psychology Department at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh are actively involved in advancing the scientific study of psychological processes and promoting the training of future psychologists and those seeking an undergraduate education in psychology. One of the major routes through which these objectives are advanced is by conducting psychological research. This endeavor not only generates knowledge about psychological processes, but it also provides experiential contexts in which students can learn about psychological research.

What happens in a psychology study varies depending on the topic that is under investigation. However, all psychology studies have certain common elements. First, all psychology studies involve an initial information stage in which study participants are informed about what will occur in the study. In most studies this information stage involves presentation of *informed consent*. Informed consent consists of a general description of participant rights and what participants will be asked to do in the study. All participants are given the informed consent to read and are required to provide their signature if they wish to participate in the study. Although uncommon, certain aspects of some studies may be withheld if doing so is deemed essential for adequately investigating the psychological topic of interest and withholding such information is deemed unlikely to significantly harm participants. In some studies, informed consent is not necessary and is substituted with an *information statement* that describes what will

happen in the study. Information statements are typically used when participants will only be completing relatively benign questionnaires. Signatures are not required for studies with information statements because participants' consent is assumed if they complete the questionnaires.

A second element common to all studies is *debriefing*, which occurs at the end of a psychology study. Because an important part of debriefing is to provide an additional educational experience for participants, debriefing involves a more thorough explanation of the study purpose of the study, the topic under investigation in the study, the methods used in the study, and any aspects of the study that were purposely withheld. Debriefing may consist of a verbal description delivered by the researcher or presentation of written information for the participant to read.

Important: Every psychology study must be approved by the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh Internal Review Board (IRB) before participants are allowed to take part in it. Approval is only granted if the IRB concludes that the study likely poses no severe, long-term risks to participants and will be carried out in an ethical manner.

Important: Participants may withdraw from any study at any time, for any reason, without explaining to the researcher their reason for doing so.

The Undergraduate Research Requirement

All students enrolled in Introductory Psychology are graded on successful completion of an undergraduate research requirement. A primary goal of instituting the research requirement is to ensure that students receive (a) first-hand educational experiences in what it is like to participate in a psychology study and (b) insight into the procedures researchers use to investigate psychological processes. One way to satisfy the research requirement is to acquire at least 3 research participation credits. One research credit is granted for every ½ hour of time a student participates in a psychology study. This means that a minimum of 1 ½ hours of research participation is necessary to successfully complete the research requirement. Although the obtainment of 3 credits is the minimum necessary for satisfaction of this requirement, some instructors may choose to require additional credits. **Important: Rarely, some students may be unable to participate due to special circumstances. In such instances, students may complete an alternative assignment, the nature of which will be determined by their course instructor.**

Overview of the UWO Department of Psychology Participant Pool

The UWO Department of Psychology participant pool is designed to promote knowledge about psychological processes and education about the methods psychologists use to advance such knowledge. The participant pool consists primarily of individuals seeking opportunities to participate in psychological research in order to (a) satisfy the undergraduate research requirement, (b) satisfy other course research requirements, (c) obtain course extra credit, or (d) acquire payment in return for participation. Individuals who wish to be a part of the participant pool may do so by requesting an account from the online sign-up system, which can be found at

<http://uwosh.sona-systems.com>. Once a participant account is established, participants may use their account to sign-up for various studies offered through the UWO Department of Psychology.

Requesting a Participant Account

Individuals who wish to be a part of the participant pool may do so by requesting a participant account from the following website <http://uwosh.sona-systems.com>. Upon arrival at the site, click on *Request and account here* under the heading *New Participant* in the lower left corner of the screen. Then follow the instructions on the following webpage. Make sure to enter your first name, last name, and student ID in the provided spaces. For your user ID, just enter the first part of your UWO email address that comes before the *@uwosh.edu* portion of your email address in the provided space. **IMPORTANT: Make sure to indicate for which class(es) you want your research participation to count if you are participating in order to satisfy an educational research requirement, to satisfy another course requirement, or to obtain course extra credit. When doing so, make sure you select the course number with the correct instructor name and the correct section number if applicable.**

Setting up a Participant Account

Once you request an account, you should receive an email with your user ID and password within 24 hours. With this information you will be able to return to the sona-systems website (<http://uwosh.sona-systems.com>), access your account, and begin signing up for studies. The first time you access your account you will be asked to answer some pre-screening questions, which may be used to determine whether you are eligible for certain restricted studies (e.g., “female only” or “male only” studies). By accessing your account, you can sign up for studies, view information about or cancel studies you have signed-up for, keep track of the number of research credits you have received (see below), and modify your user information.

Signing up for a Study

Within your participant account is a link that allows you to view information about studies and then sign-up for those studies in which you would like to participate. All studies are identified by a three digit number. When you select a specific study you will be able to view information about the time, date, and location of available study sessions. For online-only studies you will be provided with information about how to access the study via the internet.

Study information also includes a brief description of the study and lists how many credits you will receive if you participate in the study. **Important: Credits are assigned in ½ hour increments. Therefore, a study that is worth 1 credit will last up to ½ an hour, a study that is worth 2 credits will last up to 1 hour, a study that is worth 3 credits will last up to 1 ½ hours, and so on. When selecting a study in which to participate, it is important to make sure that you will be available to participate for the entire duration of the study.**

Finally, a study will list any study restrictions (e.g., age restrictions, gender restrictions, etc.) as well as the contact information for the researchers who are running the study. If you have

any questions about the study, or need to cancel your participation in a study, make sure to contact the researchers so they can assist you. **Important: After you sign up for a study, make sure to write down the researcher contact information as well as the study number, time, date, and location. Then bring this information with you to the study.** Doing so will help ensure that you attend the correct study and will aid in minimizing any potential problems that may arise (e.g., scheduling errors, attendance failure on the part of the researcher, etc.).

Research Participation Credits

Each research study is assigned a research credit value, which is based on the duration of the study. Studies that last up to ½ an hour are worth 1 credit, those that last up to 1 hour are worth 2 credits, and so on. Even if you complete a study in less time than is allotted for the study, you will still receive the minimal credit possible. For example, if you complete a 1 credit study in 20 minutes, you will still receive 1 credit even though the study did not last for 30 minutes. Similarly, if you complete a 2 credit study in 45 minutes, you will still receive 2 credits for your participation. **Important: If you attend a study and decide to discontinue participation at any time for any reason, then you will receive credit equal to the time you spent in the study.** For example, if you decide to withdraw from a 2 credit study after reading the informed consent (see above), then you will still receive 1 credit for participation.

Once you have completed your study participation, researchers are required to grant credit within 48 hours. You can view the number of research credits you have accumulated by accessing your participant account and clicking on the *My Schedule & Credits* link.

No-Show Penalties

If you sign-up for a study and fail to attend, then you will receive a no-show penalty of 1 credit. If you sign-up for a study, but are unable to attend, then you must submit a cancellation using the *My Schedule & Credits* link in your participant account. You may submit a cancellation anytime up to one hour before the beginning of the study. If you are unable to attend the study, but fail to submit a cancellation one hour prior to the beginning of the study, then you will receive a no-show penalty of 1 credit. **Important: No-show penalties are cumulative and are deducted from your overall earned research credits.** For example, if you have earned 2 research credits and receive a no-show penalty, then your overall earned research credits will be equal to 1. If you obtain more no-show penalties than research credits, then your overall earned research credit value will be a negative number. If you earn one or more non-show penalties, you can make up for the deduction by acquiring additional research credits. **Important: Any participant who receives five or more no-show penalties will no longer be allowed to participate in research studies.** Any no-show penalties that you have received can be viewed by accessing your participant account and clicking on the *My Schedule & Credits* link.

Researcher No-Shows

If you arrive on time to a study but the researcher fails to greet you, then you should contact the Pool Administrator at pooladmin@uwosh.edu and report a researcher no-show. When doing so, make sure to report the study number, time, date, and location. Also report the name of

the researcher if possible. **Important:** Wait five minutes after the start time of a study before concluding that the researcher has failed to attend the study. If you do not wait five minutes after the study start time before leaving the study location, then you may receive a no-show penalty.

Participants under the Age of 18

Participants under the age of 18 may not participate in psychology studies unless they receive parental approval to do so. Individuals under the age of 18 who are interested in participating in psychology studies should contact the Participant Pool Administrator at pooladmin@uwosh.edu, who will provide information about the necessary steps that need to be taken in order to secure parental approval.

Questions and Problems: Who to Contact?

- General question about the participant pool, the online sign-up system, or your participant account: Contact the Pool administrator at pooladmin@uwosh.edu.
- Questions about a specific study: Contact the researcher in charge of the study using the contact email address provided in the study description.
- To report a researcher no-show: Contact the pool administrator at pooladmin@uwosh.edu.
- To resolve conflicts or disagreements with a specific researcher: Contact the pool administrator at pooladmin@uwosh.edu.
- To report concerns about your treatment in a specific study or by a specific researcher: Contact Dr. David Lishner at lishnerd@uwosh.edu

Important: All questions and problems that fall into the above categories should be directed to the individuals listed for each. All questions and problems above should NOT be addressed by contacting individual course instructors.