



Policies and Procedures for the Department of Psychology Participant Pool: Instructions and Guidelines for Researchers.

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I. OVERVIEW

Christopher Newport University's Department of Psychology is committed both to research in the field of psychology and to the protection of the individuals involved. In the Spring of 2009, the Human Participant Pool Committee (HPPC) was formed to facilitate the transition to a requirement-based system from an extra-credit based system. The HPPC serves two important functions. First, participants involved in research studies gain valuable insight into the procedures and methodology of the discipline of psychology. This allows them to experience firsthand what participants must do and helps them to achieve insight into both the potential strengths and weaknesses of modern psychological research. Second, the HPPC plays a fundamental role in supporting the university's mission of providing students with applied learning experiences and faculty with resources to engage in high levels of scholarship (see Vision 2010). Every research study offered through the HPPC has been evaluated and approved by the institutional review board to ensure safe, ethical, and scientifically purposeful research practices. Moreover, the HPPC supports and maintains the ethical standards outlined by the American Psychological Association's Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct (American Psychologist, 2002). Researchers failing to abide by the standards set by the APA, CNU's IRB, or the HPPC will lose access to the human participant pool for a period of one academic year. Multiple offenses by a researcher may lead to a permanent loss of access to the human participant pool.

PSYC 201 and 202 students are required to participate in a one research credit to satisfy a course requirement. One research credit is defined as participation in ONE HOUR of research. This requirement may be met by completing multiple short studies (studies between 15 – 30 minutes), or by completing one 1 hour study.

Students can also choose to read and write a summary of a research article (refer to Section II) instead of participating in an actual research study. All participants who attend a research study can choose to leave at any time, for any reason, and without penalty.

PSYC 201 and 202 students are required to participate in one research credit (either through the experiments housed in the blue bins or through the Alternative Research Credit. Faculty may offer "extra credit" for additional participation to students in PSYC 201 or 202. They may also offer such opportunities for credit or extra credit in other psychology courses.

II. ALTERNATE ASSIGNMENT

A folder containing information regarding alternative research credit will be housed in the blue bin along side the experiments. Students opting to participate in the alternative research credit will be required to type (no handwritten summaries will be accepted by

the HPPC, unless accompanied by an accommodation letter from Disabilities Services) a 2-page article summary based on the following questions:

Question 1: Identify and define the primary issue under investigation.

Question 2: Identify and discuss the research methods employed to examine the psychological concepts under investigation.

Question 3: Report the researcher's findings in your own words.

Question 4: Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the study.

Question 5: Report your evaluation of the study and its scientific and real-world implications.

Completed papers will be placed in the designated box located in the Psychology Department Office, and will be graded by members of the HPPC Committee with participation being noted in SONA. By completing one alternate assignment, PSYC 201 and 202 students satisfy the one hour research credit requirement.

III. PROCEDURES FOR APPLYING TO CONDUCT RESEARCH WITH THE HUMAN PARTICIPANT POOL

The HPPC mandates that only researchers affiliated with the department of psychology at CNU are eligible to use the human participant pool. Researchers eligible to use the human participant pool are as follows: adjunct, tenure-track, tenured, or emeritus faculty advisors. Undergraduate researchers are also eligible to use the human participant pool, provided he or she is sponsored by a tenure-track, tenured, or emeritus faculty advisor. In this situation, the faculty advisor *assumes full responsibility for their undergraduate's actions*. Faculty members from outside the department, or other universities, may petition the department of psychology to gain access to the human participant pool. However, CNU faculty and students receive top priority to access to the human participant pool.

To gain access to the human participant pool, researchers must meet the following criteria:

- (1) The study must be approved by the IRB at CNU (add link here to site).
- (2) The study must be registered with the HPPC. To register with the HPPC, researchers must provide the HPPC with a hard or electronic copy of their approval letter from the CNU IRB. Researchers are also asked to complete a registration form (found in the CNU psychology department office or online at). All registration requests should be submitted to Dr. Jason W. Hart (phone: 757-812-2887 email: jason.hart@cnu.edu).
- (3) Researchers must receive training on the use of SONA.

IV. PARTICIPANT ALLOCATION POLICY

The human participant pool will be made available to researchers 10 days after the first day of classes in each semester. The purpose of the 10 day window is to ensure that class rosters in PSYC 201 and 202 are relatively stable. At this point, there is no limit to the number of studies a researcher may run in a given semester. The HPPC strongly recommends that researchers carefully plan their research agendas with the knowledge that others in the department also need participants to meet their professional goals. The HPPC and the department do reserve the right to revise this allocation policy in the future. The human participant pool will close 10 days prior to the end of each semester.

V. RECRUITING AND SCHEDULING PARTICIPANTS

Researchers may recruit participants using the Blue Bin or the SONA system. Students may sign up for dates and times that meet their scheduling needs. The only information students should know about a particular study is its name, location, and time commitment (e.g., a 30 minute study). When posting a study in the Blue Bin or on SONA, researchers should: (1) provide participants with contact information (phone and email) for the Primary Investigator (PI); (2) clearly provide the exact location of the study (e.g., in room 216 located on the second floor of Wingfield Hall by the men's room); and (3) provide the time commitment required by the participant (always round up to the nearest half hour; 1/2 research credit). **DO NOT** provide participants with a description of your study, as participants may select only those studies that appear interesting or exciting to them (selection bias). Also, **DO NOT** use language that encourages students to select one study over another (e.g., this study requires *only 20 minutes of your time*).

VI. GUIDELINES FOR EXPERIMENTAL SESSIONS

A. MEETING PARTICIPANTS/CANCELLATIONS

Researchers should check and review their list(s) of scheduled participants on a daily basis. Participants should be greeted by the researcher at the designated location at the designated time. Participants will not be penalized for the researcher's tardiness or lack of preparedness. If the researcher is more than 10 minutes late from the designated start of the study, participants should receive 1/2 research credit and be excused from participating in the study (See Section VIII: AWARDING RESEARCH CREDITS AND PENALTIES). Researchers should also ensure that participants are signed up for their study and not another study (it is not uncommon for multiple studies to be run at the same time within a close proximity). In such cases, soliciting other researchers' participants is strictly prohibited.

For various reasons, researchers may need to cancel research sessions. If possible, researchers should cancel research sessions at least 24 hours prior to the scheduled

time. In an emergency, the researcher must contact the department secretary to post a cancellation notification at the session(s) location. If the researcher fails to follow either policy, affected participants should receive 1/2 research credit (See Section VIII: AWARDING RESEARCH CREDITS AND PENALTIES).

B. THE EXPERIMENTAL SESSION

At the beginning of the experimental session, participants must be provided with an informed consent form. If the participant decides not to sign the form, he or she is free to leave immediately without penalty. However, the participant does not receive any research credit either. He or she will need to sign up for additional research opportunities to fulfill the research credit requirement. If the participant signs the consent form, but withdraws from the study before its conclusion, he or she is free to leave without penalty. In this situation, the participant should receive credit for the time he or she did participate in the study rounded to the nearest 1/2 hour (See Section VIII: AWARDING RESEARCH CREDITS AND PENALTIES). If the experimental session ends for unforeseen reasons (e.g., illness or equipment failure), participants should receive credit for the time he or she did participate in the study rounded to the nearest 1/2 hour (See Section VIII: AWARDING RESEARCH CREDITS AND PENALTIES).

VII. GUIDELINES FOR WEB-BASED RESEARCH

Web-based research is subject to all CNU IRB and HPPC rules and regulations. Researchers conducting web-based research will need to indicate this approach on the HPPC registration form.

VIII. AWARDING RESEARCH CREDITS AND PENALTIES

Researchers will enter all research credits via the SONA system. Research credits are entered in either 1/2 hour or hour increments. Studies requiring 30 minutes or less are entered as 1/2 hour credits. Studies requiring between 31 minutes and 60 minutes are entered as one hour credits. Studies requiring more than an hour are rounded to the nearest 1/2 hour. For example, a 75 minute study will be entered as 1 1/2 hours credit. At this point, the HPPC and the department are not in favor of penalizing participants for no-shows. The HPPC and the department, however, reserve the right to amend this policy in the future.

All research credits should be entered in a timely manner by researchers! HPPC strongly recommends that a participant's earned credits should be entered no later than one week after he or she takes part in a study. The HPPC monitors credit allocation throughout the semester in order to maintain the human participant pool's integrity. All research credit should be entered no later than XX days prior to the final day of classes.