Information about Research Participation Requirement in Psychology 101

Important Deadlines:

Wednesday, January 7th, 2026 – 1st day to sign up for and participate in studies or Option 2 assessments
Wednesday, January 21st, 2026 – Last day to receive 1 credit for participating in SONA prescreen.
Friday, March 13th, 2026 - Bonus 1 credit for completing 3 study credits (not including Option 2 or prescreen)
5 PM Monday, April 27th, 2026 – Deadline to participate in studies or complete Option 2 assessments.

The Psychology Participant Pool is a research requirement for all PSYC 101 courses, designed to provide all students taking their first course in psychology some knowledge of the procedures and conduct of psychological research. A principal aim of the requirement is for students to gain an appreciation of how psychology research works, while simultaneously acquiring new knowledge about areas of psychology that students may not encounter in their general PSYC 101 course. To satisfy this requirement, students must complete 7.5 hours of research work. This requirement can be fulfilled by participating in actual psychology research studies (Option 1) and/or by completing research assessments (Option 2).

Option 1: Participating in Research: If you choose to complete the requirement via this option, you will participate in actual ongoing psychology research studies. To participate in a research study, you log into the Participant Pool website at **http://unc.sona-systems.com** (please see the below instructions starting on page 4). The act of signing into the system and obtaining a unique id number indicates that you give your consent to be in the participant pool. There are several rules that are **very** important for you to remember when participating in research sessions. If you arrive late for a session, the session may have started and you will not be able to enter and you will not receive credit. In the event of an emergency please contact the participant pool administrator or researcher directly to see if rescheduling is possible. You may **not** participate in a research study that is being conducted by your PSYC 101 professor and you may participate **only once** in each study (you can always check the website to see which studies you have participated in).

Please note that there is a cap on the number of "online" research studies for which students may receive credit. You may receive a maximum of 2 credits from Online studies.

No-Show Policy: You should never sign up for a study you do not plan to attend. If you must cancel, you may do so via the website (http://unc.sona-systems.com) no later than 24 hours prior to the session. If you need to cancel within the 24-hour window, please contact the Participant Pool Administrator who can remove you from that session. Excluding an emergency, cancellations within 24 hours of an experiment will be considered no-shows. *If a participant fails to show up for three or more studies, they will lose the privilege of pursuing Option 1 and must instead meet the requirement through Option 2 (Canvas research assessments).*

Targeted Recruitment: The first time you log onto the Sona Systems website you will be asked to complete a multiple-choice recruitment survey to assist in finding studies that are directly related to you. Based on your answers, researchers may contact you to solicit your participation in their study. No researcher will ever have access to any identifying information (name, etc.) although your de-identified answers will possibly be shared. This set of questions is completely voluntary, although completion of the recruitment survey greatly increases your opportunity to participate in studies. As such, **completion of this survey within the first two weeks of the semester will result in a reward of 1 credit. Completion after this deadline will result in a reward of .5 credits**. If you have any questions about this step, please email the participant pool coordinator (Andrew Bresson) at psycneuroussm@unc.edu.

Adverse Weather Policy: In the event of bad weather (e.g., a snow or ice-storm), the researchers follow the University's policy – thus, if classes are being held, then research sessions will take place. If a researcher cannot make it into school due to bad weather, they will attempt to contact you via email or phone. ONLY if both classes are cancelled and offices are closed (as officially announced by the University) will research sessions be automatically cancelled.

What you should expect: Once you arrive at a research session, the researcher(s) involved will provide you with general information concerning the nature of the study (e.g., what you will be asked to do). They will then answer any questions and give you 2 consent forms to sign. One copy is for the researcher and one copy is for your records. You should keep this consent form since it serves as proof that you have attended that research study session. Please note that you do not have to participate in any research you do not wish to participate in; furthermore, if at any time you feel unable or unwilling to continue in a research study session, you are free to leave without any penalty - you will be credited for the actual amount of time you participated in the session. You can terminate participation in any given study for any reason.

In general, most research does not require participants to reveal personal information that would be considered an invasion of privacy. You may, however, refuse to answer any questions, or may request to terminate the session at any time for any reason, or if you feel the information would violate your sense of privacy. Also, be assured that any information you provide will be kept strictly confidential; in most cases the information you provide will be numerically coded to maintain your anonymity.

At the end of the session, the researcher is expected to give you a detailed account of the study hypothesis and your part in it. This procedure is called "debriefing." The debriefing may be oral and/or written. During this debriefing, you should ask any questions and make any comments you wish about the study. Keep in mind this is an educational opportunity for you, and during the debriefing stage, researchers especially welcome your additional questions and comments. Often this dialogue can help researchers in thinking about the research hypothesis and how to best test it.

The researcher will usually enter your credit into the Participant Pool system within 24 hours, however, some credits may not be entered until much later. If you have any questions about your credit, please contact the primary researcher directly. The consent form is your proof, or "receipt," that you participated in that study session. **It is vital that you keep all consent forms until the end of the semester**. Should there be a discrepancy between the number of credit hours, bring your consent forms to the Participant Pool Administrator's office (206B Davie Hall) to correct any errors. It is imperative that you hold onto those until you are certain your record is correct - usually the end of the semester - in case there are any problems.

Reminder: There is a cap on the number of "online" research studies for which students may receive credit. You may receive a maximum of 2 credits from Online studies.

Option 2: Research assessments: For this option, you must download and read articles (that have been selected and placed on a joinable Canvas site about Psychology research and then complete a short assessment about each article that you've read. All assessments are graded automatically and immediately upon submission, and you must receive a minimum score of 7 in order to receive credit. Each successfully completed assessment (score of 7 or higher) will count as **one (1) credit** for the pool requirement. Note that credit for these assignments will not be immediately posted to your SONA account as credits from the two systems are not combined until after the last day of classes.

The articles you will need to read are located on Canvas under the joinable, "Psychology Participant Pool – Option 2" site. To access the articles (and to take the assessments), join the Canvas site using this link: https://uncch.instructure.com/enroll/LYFCXM. After joining this site, you can locate all available articles and their associated assessment via the "tests/quizzes" link.

Fulfilling the Requirement: As previously mentioned you must participate in **7.5** hours of research work to satisfy this requirement. This requirement can be fulfilled by combining the two options in a manner that is most suitable for you. For example, you may wish to participate in 7.5 hours of research study sessions; or you may wish to participate in 4.5 hours of research study sessions and complete 3 research assessments for the remaining 3 hours of credit. Any combination of Options 1 and 2 is fine if you combine the requirements in such a way that their sum equals 7.5 hours. **Regardless of what option you choose you should always create an account with the Sona-Systems website**. Failure to do so could result in your credits not being recorded properly. Credits from the two systems will be combined after the last day of classes.

Bonus credit for participating in research: Participants who complete 3 credits of research studies by **March 13th** will be granted a 1 credit bonus for participating in research early. To receive the bonus, 3 credits worth of Option 1 studies must be granted by the above date. These credits may come from any number of studies. **Credits from the prescreen and from Option 2 do not count for the purposes of receiving the bonus credit.**

For Questions and Problems: If you ever have questions or concerns, please email the Participant Pool Administrator at psycneuroussm@unc.edu. **Your PSYC 101 professor has nothing to do with the credit requirement and will not be able to answer your questions or resolve your problem/s.** You are welcome to visit the Participant Pool Administrator in their office (206B Davie Hall), but the preferred method of communication is email.

Deadline: The last day to complete the requirement is the **last day of classes (April 27) at 5pm.** Options 1 and 2 must be completed by this date and time.

Failure to Complete the Requirement: Should you fail to complete the research requirement by the specified deadline, **you will lose a half letter grade off your final PSYC 101 grade.** *There is no option to make up any credits after the deadline on the last day of classes.*

Again, For Problems and Questions: Any questions or problems that may arise during the semester can be brought to the attention of the Participant Pool coordinator: psycneuroussm@unc.edu, 206B Davie Hall.

Using the Participant Pool Website

1. Navigate your browser to http://unc.sona-systems.com

2. On the left-hand side of the page, click on "ONYEN ID Log in".

3. The first time you log onto the Sona Systems website you will be taken directly to the prescreening questionnaire. Should you choose to complete this questionnaire within the first two weeks (January 7th – January 21st), you will be rewarded with 1 credit immediately. Afterwards, completion of this survey will result in a .5 credit reward. Select "Start Prescreen." You must answer all questions in this section at this time. Once you have finished click on "record responses." After you review your answers click on the "save" button. You are now ready to sign up for experiments if you choose to do so.

4. To sign up for a study, click the Study Sign Up button. This will provide a list of studies for which you have not signed up. To sign up for a study that you think looks interesting, click the name of the study. This will bring you to a screen depicting study information. This information will include the name of the researcher, the duration of the study, as well as a longer description of what the study entails. If this study still appeals to you, click on "view time slots for this study." A list of available time slots will be shown. Choose what time will fit your schedule and click the sign up button beside the chosen time.

5. To check what sessions you are signed up for, click the My Schedule button. In this screen you will see an activity log of the sessions you have signed up for as well as the total credits you have. To cancel an experiment, click the cancel button located directly to the right of the experiment you no longer can attend. The Sona System will only allow you to cancel a study sign-up up to 24 hours prior to the start time. If you need to cancel within this 24-hour window, please contact the Participant Pool Coordinator. In practice, it is best not to sign up for a session unless you are sure you can attend.

6. Finally, make sure you click the Logout button to close your session.