

Dear Psychology Department Researchers:

Enclosed are instructions about how to add your study to the Psychology Research Experience website for the upcoming semester. The web address for SONA Systems is:[**http://ucf.sona-systems.com/**](http://ucf.sona-systems.com/)**.** If you would like to carry over an existing study from this past semester, please e-mail a request to the SONA Systems Graduate Assistant (GTA) ([psych-research@ucf.edu](mailto:psych-research@ucf.edu)) and they will change your setting back to active (as long as the IRB expiration date has not passed). If you would like to add a new study, please follow the directions below. You are responsible for reading and adhering to the departmental SONA guidelines document (attached to this same e-mail). Failure to adhere to the department SONA guidelines will result in data collection for your study in the SONA system being halted until further notice. You need to clearly note the name of the Psychology Department faculty member who is directly running or supervising the study. We will not approve applications that do not have a current Psychology Department faculty member directly involved with the study (which includes being listed on the IRB protocol for the study).

Please note that some of our undergraduates are under the age of 18. In order to expose these minors to any portion of your research procedures (including online or paper surveys), you must include the proper parental permission procedures in your IRB submission. It is up to each researcher to decide whether they would like to include these individuals and to go through the necessary IRB paperwork and consent procedures. **However, if you did not clear your specific study for the inclusion of minors through the IRB, you must set your study filter to only make your study visible to those at least age 18**. We have a prescreen questionnaire with basic demographic questions required of all participants and you can then choose to set your filters to hide your study from particular students, based on responses to these questions.

The first day that you can start collecting data for the upcoming term is **Monday 08/21/2023**. Please be aware of the various deadlines for SONA participation this semester. They are:

**Fall 2023 deadlines:**

1. **Sunday - 09/10/2023 @ 11:59 PM EST**
2. **Sunday - 10/01/2023 @ 11:59 PM EST**
3. **Sunday - 10/22/2023 @ 11:59 PM EST**
4. **Sunday - 11/12/2023 @ 11:59 PM EST**
5. **Sunday - 12/03/2023 @ 11:59 PM EST**

The above final due date is the last day to collect data this semester. Researchers must award credit within 48 hours of participation to ensure that students are properly awarded credit.

PLEASE NOTE: the faculty administrator of SONA Systems is Dr. Joseph Schmidt. The graduate student assistant is Ms. Victoria Steigerwald. Please direct questions to the GTA ([psych-research@ucf.edu](mailto:psych-research@ucf.edu)) whenever possible.

Sincerely,

Joseph Schmidt, Ph.D., Associate Profressor, UCF Psychology Department

###### Psychology Research Experience Procedures

If you want to post a new study on SONA Systems you must **submit the below application to the GTA mailbox (or scan and e-mail it to the GTA at** [psych-research@ucf.edu](mailto:psych-research@ucf.edu)).

**The Required Application Packet**

* Submit the following items:
  1. Completed Research Experience Application form (attached)
  2. Your IRB research protocol document
  3. A copy of your approval letter from the UCF Institutional Review Board

##### **Study Approval**

**If you have never been a researcher in SONA Systems:** After the GTA has approved your application materials, s/he will enter you as a researcher in SONA Systems and you will be e-mailed your log-in information (within 2 business days). At that point, you will need to add your study in the system, including your current IRB expiration date (and IRB study #). When you are ready for your study to be approved and immediately visible to participants, click on the link called, “Send a Request” listed next to the “Study Status.” This will send the GTA an e-mail stating that you are ready for her/him to activate your study and make it immediately available to participants. S/he will then approve the study within two business days, by setting it to be visible to participants. If the GTA has not approved either your initial log-in information or your study within two business days from a given request, please contact him at [psych-research@ucf.edu](mailto:psych-research@ucf.edu).

**If you already have a researcher log-in with SONA Systems:** You can proceed with entering your new study at any point before or after giving the GTA the application packet. When you are ready for your study to be approved and immediately visible to participants, please email the GTA at [psych-research@ucf.edu](mailto:psych-research@ucf.edu) stating that you are ready for her/him to activate your study and make it immediately available to participants. You will need to attach your application packet to the emailed request. S/he will then approve the study within two business days, by setting it to be visible to participants. If s/he has not approved your study within two business days from the given request, please contact her/him at [psych-research@ucf.edu](mailto:psych-research@ucf.edu).

\*\*NOTE: A feature on this system is implemented so that the system will automatically “freeze” your study from further participants if your IRB expiration date passes. If you get a new IRB continuation expiration date, you must put a copy of that letter in the GTA’s SONA mailbox (or scan and e-mail to her/him), so that s/he can update the date in your account. If you receive a letter via email with the new IRB continuation expiration date, feel free to email it to the GTA at [psych-research@ucf.edu](mailto:psych-research@ucf.edu).

##### **Research Project Summary**

The summary of your research project is for our departmental records. For this you must use a copy of the protocol that you submitted to the Institutional Review Board. Your IRB approval letter must cover the *specific project* that you are running on this system.

##### **Ethical Principles of Research Training**

All of your experimenters/research assistants (including undergraduate assistants) who will have any interaction with a human participant must complete the online research ethics training (CITI course) found on the UCF IRB web site at http://www.research.ucf.edu/Compliance/IRB/Investigators/Docs/IRB\_Online\_Training\_Program\_Info.pdf. Per UCF IRB rules, this training needs to be completed before any particular individual can interact with a human research participant for any data collection.

**Unique ID codes**

The SONA system is set up to automatically assign a unique, numeric ID code to students. The purpose of this ID is to identify participants to researchers in a way that does not reveal their identity or compromise their privacy. Researchers should only see a participant’s ID code and not their name or email address. Many IRB regulations governing human subject research require that unique ID codes, such as these, are used. These unique ID codes are also needed to properly synch external websites that may be used for data collection, such as Qualtrics. These IDs should stay within the SONA system and ***items asking participants to report their SONA IDs should not be included in any questionnaires (online or in person)***. Doing so jeopardizes the high level of privacy provided by the IDs and allows opportunities for researchers to connect participants to their data responses.

##### **Post-Participation Educational Feedback (REQUIRED)**

Providing the undergraduate students with educational feedback about your experiment is critical to the training mission of our department. This needs to be done regardless of whether your study has a waiver for not providing consent. This will not only provide participants with an explanation of the overall research purpose but it will provide an opportunity for them to inquire further on a given topic. As such, feedback should be as clear and informative as possible -- students who complete your study must understand both the purpose and the significance of your research project. You must also provide this summary in a written form, which includes your name and telephone number (or the faculty member’s info), along with an invitation for students to contact you if they have any further questions or comments about your project, or if they would like to receive the results of the study (if applicable).

##### **Research Experience Evaluation (REQUIRED)**

*Every* student who participates in an online or in person research study must be given access to the link for our Research Experience Evaluation Form. This form will automatically be emailed to students via the SONA system once a researcher has awarded credit. There is nothing that you, as a researcher, need to do to provide participants with this form. Please do not distribute paper copies of this form as only online submissions are accepted. If interested, you may view the form here: <https://ucf.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6iiRz5Wbs4R2ngV>

##### **Participant Reminders/Timeslots/Cancellations/Crediting**

Students who sign up for your study will automatically receive an email reminder 24 hours prior to the appointment time. They may cancel the appointment up to 18 hours prior to the scheduled appointment. In addition, no participant can sign up for your study within 24 hours of a given time slot. It is your responsibility to regularly check the website for participants who have signed up for your study. These deadlines include weekend days.

While each research study may have varying participation needs, please note we have numerous deadlines throughout the semester. Researchers will, at a minimum, set up a timeslot prior to the corresponding deadlines and ensure that credit is properly granted within 48 hours of participation.

Credit for participation must be awarded to participants within 48 hours of their participation. For online studies within the SONA system or online studies from external systems linked to SONA, such as Qualtrics, automatic credit granting should be set up. The system will then automatically award participation credit once participants have completed the online study. In order for external systems to automatically grant credit properly, they must be correctly synched to the SONA system.

For studies where participation credit needs to be manually entered, researchers ***must*** enter the SONA system and manually credit those students within 48 hours after their participation. When manually awarding credit, if the number of points varies from the set number in your study, you will also need to manually award that credit. If you manually enter credit for any reason, please put the credit date as the date of actual participation.

Studies will have variable credit, depending on if the study is conducted fully online or face-to-face. Participation in face-to-face studies earns 0.50 points for each half hour. Participation in online studies earns 0.25 points for each half hour. Make sure you round up when granting credit.

\*\*We realize that your stated time duration for either a face-to-face or online studies that you list on your application is only an estimate (sometimes a rough estimate). Therefore, you will need to closely monitor your first batch of participants to see how long it actually takes them. For online SONA studies, there is a variable in the Excel download file that tells you exactly how many minutes the person took to complete your online study. If the actual duration varies from your initial estimate, you need to e-mail the GTA at [psych-research@ucf.edu](mailto:psych-research@ucf.edu) and request that s/he change your duration and related automatic credit points in the system (and in the study description). We will be monitoring this over the course of the semester as well.

Note our five deadlines throughout the semester. These deadlines apply to our general psychology students who are completing the immersive research experience as part of their course requirement. Students must earn a total of ten points throughout the semester. Each deadline requires that a minimum of two additional points be earned. Note, points can be earned in advance. A student may elect to complete points early in the semester, and that would satisfy future deadlines. However, once a deadline has passed, students cannot make-up any missed points. Students completing the immersive research experience need to complete ten points throughout the entire semester, and this part of their course counts as 10% of their final grade in the course. It is for this reason that researchers must ensure that credit is granted within 48 hours after participation.

There are three credit options within the SONA system. These include “grant credit,” “excused no show,” and “unexcused no show.” Participants who participate in your student should be marked “grant credit” in order to receive credit for participating. For online studies that students signed up for but did not participate in or studies where participants reported a valid reason for not participating, “excused no show” should be chosen. For instances where participants signed up for a study and did not participate and did not report a valid reason, “unexcused no show” should be chosen. Participants should be permitted to withdraw from any study at any time without penalty. Any study that includes specific stipulations for not granting credit should have the stipulations specified in their approved IRB protocol and explanation of research. When sending your application packet to the GTA please highlight any such stipulations in your submitted protocol.

**Participant No-Shows or Late Arrivals**Please keep in mind that we have a rule in which undergraduates who fail to arrive for a scheduled appointment (without cancelling more than 18 hours prior to the appointment – including weekends) or are more than 5 minutes late to that appointment need to be manually tagged as a “Unexcused No Show” in the system by the researcher under that time slot. This will give them one penalty credit (i.e., they need to complete one additional credit to make up for the missed study). Additionally, if a particular student receives this tag more than one time during the course of a semester, the undergraduate will be locked out from using the system for the remainder of the semester. This will be clearly communicated to the students. However, we rely on the researchers to make sure they note the instance as an “unexcused no show” under that student’s timeslot in the system. In terms of the students who are more than 5 minutes late, it is at the researcher’s discretion whether to proceed with running them or tagging them as a no-show. It may depend on the researcher’s schedule.

**Advertising to Students**

Please be aware that the department has decided that no advertising of studies is permitted. This includes, but it not limited to, advertising to students by going into classrooms, standing outside of classrooms, sending emails or other messages, or asking instructors, teaching assistants, other students etc. to send emails or other messages for the purpose of recruiting participants for a study.

**Assistance Using the SONA System**

To aid researchers in their use of the SONA system and adhering to our department policies regarding the SONA system, our department provides a SONA system webcourse. The use of the webcourse is not required. It is intended to answer the most commonly asked questions about using the SONA system. Researchers can self-enroll in the course by following this link (<https://webcourses.ucf.edu/courses/1343326>). Topics included in the webcourse include working with web based (online) studies, using online external studies (such as Qualtrics) and synching external studies to the SONA system for automatic credit granting, working with online survey studies within the SONA system, working with timeslots, downloading data, and so on. Additional resources may be added to the webcourse as needed.

**Psychology Research Experience Application**

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| --- |
| Name of person completing this form: |
| Department: |
| Office: |
| Telephone Number: |
| Email to be Used for SONA Systems Announcements: |
| Username as a SONA Researcher (different from participant account): |
| Title of Study that participants will see on SONA Systems: |
| IRB Approval Number: |
| Do you have IRB approval for using minors in this particular study? (YES/NO) \*\*Note: If “no,” you must set a prescreen filter on your experiment under SONA Systems to “hide” the experiment from students under the age of 18. |
| Do you have any IRB approved stipulations for not granting participation credit? (YES/NO)  **\*\*Note: If “no,” you must award credit to all participants who have started to participate in your study credit for participation after 48 hours of participation. If “yes,” highlight these stipulations in your protocol when sending your application packet.** |
| Estimated number of participants needed: |
| Estimated time required for each study session (e.g., 30m, 1hr, 10hr): |
| Study location (building and room number): |
| Name of all individuals on IRB protocol for this study: |
| Psychology Department faculty advisor/collaborator name: |

**Checklist (Please place a checkmark next to each item after reading)**

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| --- | --- |
| I read and understand the terms outlined in the Research Experience Procedures. |  |
| I will adhere to the Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct (www.apa.org/ethics). |  |
| I am aware of the midsemester and end of semester data collection deadlines for this term. |  |
| I understand that I must provide a post-participation education form to participants in my study. |  |
| I am aware that participation points are earned in 30-minute increments (rounded up). |  |
| I am aware that SONA Systems should be set to automatically credit participants 48 hours after the scheduled appointment time. |  |
| I understand that I must award participation credit after 48 hours of participation. |  |
| I am aware that I must enter a participant timeslot as “Unexcused No Show” if a participant does not show without cancelling more than 18 hours prior to the study – or if they are more than 5 minutes late (this latter example is at researcher’s discretion). |  |
| I realize that I must have specific IRB permission to use participants under the age of 18. |  |
| I understand that I have unlimited timeslots for this semester. |  |
| I have attached (a) a summary of my research project AND (b) a copy of my approval letter from the University's Institutional Review Board to this form. |  |

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_