**SONA System Rules - UCF Psychology Department**

**Updated 1/3/2019**

**Note:** The following rules have been approved by the Psychology Department faculty. These are now all in effect and will be enforced.

**Advertising studies to undergraduate students**

* The primary form of advertising for studies will be the listing and objective description of the study within SONA. These descriptions and titles need to be a clear direct explanation and description of study. No manipulative or advertising language (e.g., exclamation marks) can be used. This will be monitored and enforced by the SONA administrator and assistant.
* It is permissible to create a flyer for placement in the glass cases in the Psychology Building. The flyers must be pre-approved and stamped by the SONA administrator, as these also cannot contain “advertising language” and must mimic the study title and information that was approved in SONA for that study.
* It is NOT permissible for researchers to go into classes to directly recruit participants.
* It is NOT permissible for researchers to stand outside (or inside) classrooms to directly recruit students into their study.
  + Researchers may have a table in the general lobby area of the building in which students can come and get information about their study (with no “advertising language”) – but students cannot be directly signed up for the study and no contact information can be gathered for the researchers to later contact those students. Students must sign up via SONA.
  + Researchers may ask particular instructors to notify students about their SONA study, but these instructors may not display or describe any information that is different than the title and description in SONA. Instructors are in no way required to do this for researchers and may do this at their own discretion.
* If a study offers monetary reimbursement as one option, those studies may recruit participants directly from a table and flyers around campus. However, flyers in our building are still restricted to the glass cases.

**Use of Cash Reimbursement vs. SONA Credit Reimbursement**

We will allow researchers to use SONA for studies that offer either cash reimbursement or SONA credit reimbursement. In addition, we will allow researchers to offer the participant a choice of either cash or SONA credits. However, we will not allow any study to offer a given participant both cash and SONA credit for participation in the same study session. Whichever option the researcher chooses must be clearly described in the SONA study description and must follow what is stated in the IRB protocol for reimbursement for that particular study.

**Consequences for undergraduate students failing to show up for an experiment**

* If a participant fails to show for a scheduled appointment, the researcher MUST go into SONA and manually log the “Unexcused No Show” option for that participant under that timeslot.
* If a participant tries to cancel within 24 hours prior to the allotted time (including weekends), or is more than five minutes late to the session – the researcher can determine if they still would like to use that participant. If the researcher can no longer run that participant, then the researcher must go into SONA and manually choose the “Unexcused No Show” option for that participant under that timeslot.
* If a student has **two unexcused no shows** in a given semester, that student will automatically receive an e-mail stating that the system has locked their account for the remainder of the semester. That student would then have to choose the other activities (that do not involve SONA) for the remainder of their required or extra credit points for that given semester. That student will be allowed to register again for SONA the following semester.

**Researchers Overbooking Timeslots**

* Some researchers are choosing to overbook their timeslots because of the large no show rate. Many of these researchers are studying teams in which they need a particular number of participants to show up at a given time or they have to cancel for everyone.
* We will allow this practice only if the study description in SONA clearly describes the risk of overbooking AND the consequences of what will happen if the student does get overbooked.
* In addition, any study that overbooks must have an alternate research study that the student can participate at that same assigned timeslot and building (if they cannot participate in the assigned research study). This alternate study must be at least 75% of the duration of the original team study. We will only approve studies in which this is clearly described. This alternate study must also be able to start within 15 minutes of the first team study. The participants must also be able to qualify for the alternate study if they qualify for the team study (no additional exclusions for alternate study). However, the student must receive the full number of credits for this alternate activity as they would have for the originally assigned activity. The alternate study must be approved by the IRB and the researcher must submit a separate SONA application packet for the alternate study – clearly describing that it is an alternate study to a specific team study. The alternate study must be given a separate title in SONA Systems that the points are awarded to.
* If a participant shows up to the scheduled appointment and then cannot participate – either because they were overbooked or because not enough participants showed up for the “team/group” study – they must be given both of the following two options to choose from:
  + Offer the participant the opportunity to reschedule for a later timeslot of the original study and receive the entire SONA credit at that later time AND receive 1 additional SONA credit for their inconvenience (equivalent of one hour of time) – regardless of whether they choose to try to participate again. This SONA credit will be manually entered by the researchers. The researchers must immediately e-mail that participant (or provide them written documentation) of this future 1 point award.
  + Let the participant participate in the alternate study at that same timeslot – as described in bullet above (with no additional 1 point).
* The participant can choose whichever of these two options that he or she prefers.

**Consequences if participant shows up to scheduled timeslot and is then not given the opportunity to participate because a researcher does not show up or tries to cancel with less than 24 hours notice:**

* The participant must be given the full SONA credit for that study even though they did not participate. This full SONA credit must be entered immediately (within 48 hours) by the researcher.
* However, researchers CAN cancel a scheduled timeslot with no credit given to the student if the researchers provide this notice more than 24 hours in advance of the scheduled appointment (including weekends).

**Timeslots assigned to studies**

* We will assign unlimited timeslots (participants) to all SONA studies. Recent inspection of the supply and demand demonstrated that there are more than enough participants for all studies. Therefore there is no current need to “cap” studies. We will continue to monitor this situation, but our current default procedure is to provide unlimited participant access to all studies.

**Research Studies and Use of SONA**

* All studies that are offering course credit in a Psychology course must use SONA to list the study unless that study is being done within only that class as a learning goal (e.g., in Research Methods courses). This applies to regional campuses and online studies as well.

**Educational Component to SONA Studies**

* All studies on SONA are required to provide an educational component at the end of the study that describes things about the study (so that undergraduates could learn something about research from this). This must include a written “post-participation statement” that the students either receive in-person or view online at the end of the study that describes that basic reasons for study and basics of what was being examined – and provides contact information if student would later like to receive the results of the study. If the study is done in person, the experimenter must review this information with the participant and answer any questions that the participant may have. The SONA administrator and assistant will monitor and enforce this rule.

**Participant Research Experience Evaluation Form**

* All face-to-face studies are required to give the participant the “Research Experience Evaluation” form at the conclusion of the study. The researcher must “type” their study information at the top of the form and photocopy it for their participants – so we can easily identify the study when we receive the completed forms. This is not required for studies conducted entirely online.
* The SONA administrator and assistant will routinely review these to help ensure that the researchers are treating the participants with respect, providing education about the research, and answering any questions that participants have.

**Experimenter Access to SONA**

* Only Psychology Department faculty members have access to the Psychology Department SONA System – unless we allow a special exception (that would be unlikely). Therefore, all study applications must clearly specify a particular faculty from our department that is actively involved in that study (even if only as a direct supervisor). That faculty member MUST also be clearly listed in the IRB document for that study.

**SONA Credits Awarded Per Time Spent in Study**

* All face-to-face studies will award participants 0.5 SONA points per 30 minutes of participation (rounded up).
* All online studies will award participants 0.25 SONA points per 30 minutes of participation (rounded up).
* If researchers are using the automated feature in SONA to award points, they are required to manually change the default points for participants that do not meet the estimated time length (for face-to-face studies). For online studies, researchers are required to routinely check the automated field in the Excel download that lists how long participants actually took to complete the online study and adjust the automatic credit accordingly (to estimate how long that the large majority of participants are taking).
  + Whenever the estimated length and SONA credits are altered, this must altered in the Consent forms (requires IRB addendum) and SONA description for that study. This helps ensure that participants have a reasonable expectation of the credits that they will receive for any particular study.

**Handling Partial Completions of Online SONA Surveys**

If you receive an automated e-mail from SONA notifying you that a participant only partially completed your survey (discontinued before end) and the timeslot is awaiting action, please go to that timeslot within 48 hours, click on Modify, and then look at the start time and stop time indicated at top. Then manually award the participant the number of credits for that duration (0.25 for each 30 minutes rounded up; e.g., 35 minutes = 0.50 credits).

**Online vs. face-to-face ratio:**

The system will be set to only allow 40% of the total SONA points applied toward any particular class to come from online studies (rounded to nearest 0.25 point). The pedagogical rationale for this is that we believe that students get more of an educational research experience from face-to-face studies, so we would like to limit their credits to be only 2/5 online vs. 3/5 face-to-face.

**Accommodation of this rule for regional and online classes:**

As it is particularly difficult for some students from regional and online classes to drive over to the main campus for face-to-face studies, we allow students in those courses do 100% of their credits online, especially considering that this is a small portion of the overall SONA pool. To implement this, we simply enter a higher total number of possible credits for those particular courses, so that the 40% rule would still allow them to get 100% of the “actual” credits online.

**Communication of Student SONA Credits to Instructors**

All communication of student SONA credits to instructors must come from the SONA administrator/grad student and never directly from researchers.

**Researcher Use of SONA Systems**

* Researchers may lose their privilege of using SONA if they repeatedly violate rules of SONA, including excessive researcher no-shows to scheduled timeslots.

**Alternate Activity Requirement**

All classes that offer SONA points for academic credit (even as extra credit) must also offer an alternative activity that does not require participation in research studies (e.g., summarizing research articles). These alternative activities should be worth the same number of points for the same estimated time required for completion, as compared to the SONA alterative.