

RP Pool Guidelines for Researchers Fall 2025

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The RP Pool will open for data collection Aug 18th at 8:00AM through Nov 25th at 5:00PM.

This document provides general guidelines about the research pool. In addition, this document describes rules and regulations that researchers must follow in order for the use of the pool to be fair and equitable for everyone in the department. For more information on how to post studies or to troubleshoot problems with Sona, you can check the Sona documentation on the UGA Psychology Department website (www.uga.edu/psychology) or you can email the RP Coordinator for specific questions at rp@uga.edu.

Table of Contents

Topic

General Information

Requisition

Research Experience

Requirement Guidelines

Use of Lotteries

Online Studies

Record of Participation

Consent

Debriefing

Cancellation

Information on the RP website

What Students Must Do

What Researchers Must Do

General Information

In order to have access to the RP Pool, you must either be

1. A faculty member or graduate student in the psychology or sociology departments who is in good standing with the department, OR
2. A faculty member outside of these departments who is in active collaboration with a faculty member of the psychology or sociology department. Prior collaborations with faculty members in the psychology or sociology departments do not merit access to the RP Pool.

Research participants may be obtained from students enrolled in Elementary Psychology (PSYC 1101), General Psychology (PSYC 1030H). (The particular composition of the RP Pool may vary from semester to semester, but these are generally the courses that comprise the pool.)

Research participation by these students is intended to be a learning experience for them. The students' research orientation requirement (whether it be participation in research or summarizing research articles) is basically the equivalent of the lab section in, for example, a physics course— it is intended to familiarize the students with current research topics and techniques.

Because many researchers depend on this source for research participants, all users of the system must treat research participants with courtesy and consideration. Care should also be taken to ensure that the students' participation is a learning experience. Investigators who fail to observe the guidelines described in this document may be denied access to the RP Pool.

Requisition

Prior to running any research participants, prospective investigators must

1. Receive approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB).
2. Set up your experiment on Sona Systems. Once you get done it will ask you to send a request to activate the study—be sure to send this request in order to activate your study.
3. Included in this request, make sure to forward me an email indicating IRB approval or include the IRB approval number in the study posting on Sona. You will receive verification of your approval from me once you have forwarded this information.

Research Experience Requirement

For Fall 2025, all students are required to earn 6.5 research credits. Otherwise, their final grade will be penalized.

Students are not required to participate in psychology studies. Alternatively, they may choose to complete research alternative opportunities posted in the Sona system.

For the summer sessions (and summer only) in-person studies will be incentivized. To incentive in-person offerings, participants will earn an additional .5 credits for in-person studies. For example, a participant would earn 1 credit for a 30 minute in-person study compared to only .5 credit for a 30-minute online study.

Please observe the following guidelines:

- Inducements may not be posted on the experimental listing (e.g., "This experiment takes only 15 MINUTES" or "Fun, Fun, Fun"). In addition, the RP Committee has decided that students may not receive both course credit and monetary compensation for participation in the same study. In addition, lotteries are not permitted (see below). This is seen as an extra inducement and would give unfair advantage to one study over all the others. The RP Pool was established to give all researchers equal access to research participants.
- Researchers using the RP Pool are not allowed to go into PSYC 1101 classes to recruit participants for research projects, even if the instructor has agreed to let you do so. The

only form of recruitment allowed is the sign-up procedure on the website. This ensures that everyone has equal access to the RP Pool.

- Participants have the option of not participating in a study or terminating participation at any point during the session. If a participant refuses to participate, give the participants the full amount of credit for participating in the study (or for participating in the first session for multi-part studies). Participants should not be penalized in any way for deciding not to participate in a study. For example, if a student shows up for a 1.0 credit study, reads the consent form, and subsequently decides that he or she does not want to participate (or signs the consent form and later changes his or her mind), the student still should receive the full amount of 1.0 credit.
- Regarding the number of credits that participants receive for participating in a study, participants should always receive at least the amount they signed up for. It is the responsibility of the researcher to provide a reasonably accurate estimate of how long studies will take for participants to complete on average. If participants end up taking longer than what they signed up for, the credit should be adjusted accordingly. For example, if a study is worth 2.0 credits, but a participant takes 2 hours and 15 minutes to complete the study, he or she should receive 2.5 credits. This adjustment can be easily made for each individual on your schedule (changing it for one person will not affect the entire list).
- Psychology faculty and graduate students are allowed to have accounts on the Sona Systems website. To request an account, email the RP Coordinator (RP@uga.edu) with the name and email to be associated with the account. Undergraduate research assistants are not permitted to have researcher accounts on the Sona Systems website. Usually, the best option is for a researcher to create a Lab login that will be used for many researchers and attached to many studies. The login and password would be lab-specific and would be what undergraduate research assistants use to post study times, credit participants, etc.
- Credits should only be granted to participants who fulfilled the study requirements. For example, if participants only participate in Part 1 of a study and not Part 2, they only receive credit for their participation in Part 1.
- In order to maintain the RP Pool as a common good for researchers, we often implement use restrictions (i.e., no single study may use more than 10% of the pool's available participant hours and no single lab may use more than 20% of the pool's available participant hours). If this restriction is in place, the RP Pool Committee will monitor participant hour usage and notify the appropriate researchers if/when these limitations are reached. The RP Pool Committee reserves the right to suspend any study or lab's use of the RP Pool at any time in order to ensure all researchers have access to participants.

Use of Lotteries

Although IRB sometimes approves the use of lotteries in experimental research, users of the RP Pool may not use lotteries because the RP Committee believes that such use violates the notion of equal access to research participants by all users of the RP Pool. You may not allow your participants to "gamble" with their RP credits.

Investigators who fail to observe the guidelines described in this document may be denied access to the RP Pool.

Record of Participation

Each research participant is entitled to one half-credit (0.5) for each half-hour or part of a half-hour of participation. For example, if your study takes 20 minutes, the research participant receives one half-credit. If your study takes 75 minutes, the research participant receives 1.5 credits. You may not give extra credits (e.g., 3 credits for 2 hours) as an inducement to get students to participate in a study.

Award your credits on a regular basis, preferably at least once a week (or every time you view your schedule). All credit submissions are due by 5:00 PM on May 1st. Researchers who turn in credit submissions late or run studies while the RP pool is closed may lose their RP pool privileges for the next semester. Add pending credits must be resolved by this deadline.

Consent Forms

Each research participant must sign a legally effective informed consent statement that has been approved by IRB before participating in a study.

Debriefing

All research participants are to be provided with a clear post-study debriefing. This must constitute a learning experience for the research participant. This usually consists of a full explanation of everything that happened during the session, what was being studied, and a summary of your hypotheses. Phrasing of the presentation must be in the manner understandable to the student, and questions should be encouraged and answered.

If deception was used in the study, you must explain three things to the participants: 1) what you did not tell them, 2) why you did not tell it to them, and 3) what your hypotheses/predictions are.

Cancellation

Students may cancel their appointments without penalty by logging onto the web site at least 24 hours in advance of the appointment. In cases where the cancellation is received less than 24 hours in advance, the system will not allow the participant to cancel. For such emergencies, the participant will contact the Investigator directly to cancel the appointment.

In general, unexcused no-shows should only be given in extreme circumstances. If participants make a reasonable attempt to contact the Investigator in advance of the study, the participant should be given an excused no-show and allowed to sign up again at a later date. If participants fail to show up at all or do not contact the researcher, an unexcused no-show is appropriate.

If a researcher must cancel an appointment more than 24 hours in advance this can be done easily in Sona. **This should not happen often, but if a researcher has to cancel appointment**

times within 24 hours, participants should be awarded credit for the study automatically. The RP Pool Committee reserves the right to restrict RP Pool usage if a researcher is routinely cancelling credits within the 24-hour window.

Information about the RP website

Both researchers and students will access the RP Pool through the following site:

<http://uga.sona-systems.com>

There is a document on the Psychology Department website on how to use the Sona Systems website. Check this document for extra information on how to post and administer studies and how to troubleshoot issues.

What students must do

Students will be added to the Sona system by the RP Coordinator at the beginning of the semester. Once registered, they will be able to sign up for studies and view their credit listings at any time. Students will sign up for experimental sessions exclusively on this site. When logged on, participants will first see a list of active studies. Each study listing appears on a separate line containing the study number, the supervisor, the experimenter, phone number, eligibility restrictions, and study title. An icon on the left indicates if times are available for sign-ups. By clicking this icon, the student sees a list of sessions for the given experiment. The student signs up by simply choosing a time and clicking the icon for that time. The student then receives immediate confirmation of their appointment via e-mail and an e-mail reminder 24 hours before the appointment. Participants can only sign up for a particular study once, unless multiple sessions are required or the researcher allows them to sign up more than once.

Cancellations follow the same procedure as sign-ups: a RP finds his or her individual session in the list of sessions for a specific study, and cancels by clicking the “Cancel” icon. The system will not allow a RP to cancel within 24 hours of his or her session. The only way a RP can cancel within this time period is to contact the experimenter associated with the study, who then can cancel them manually.

What researchers must do

To post an experiment, check the schedule, or award credits, researchers should enter the website listed above. You will be asked for a User ID and Password. If you do not have a User ID or Password, e-mail the RP coordinator at RP@uga.edu and the RP Coordinator will provide you with this information. When you go to the front page of the site (the login page), you may see a link to request an account. This form is only for participants. Do not use this form to request an account, as participant accounts have an entirely different set of privileges, and the privileges are not appropriate for a researcher.