**DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY**

**RESEARCH PARTICIPATION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

**Fall 2025**

The Department of Psychology provides opportunities for students to become familiar with the nature of psychological research through personal experience. Direct experience with psychological research will allow you to evaluate claims concerning psychological issues in an informed and educated fashion. In addition, participation in research can offer you the chance to make a long-lasting contribution to the science of psychology by allowing you to provide your own perceptions and experiences.

Research participation can add extra credit toward your final grade in this class. The number of study hours that you are required to complete, or have the option to complete in order to earn extra credit, will be announced by your instructor and/or included in your syllabus. To satisfy this requirement, you may serve as a research participant in projects conducted by members of the Psychology Department. If your course requires you to complete studies and you have an objection to this, please consult your syllabus/instructor to ask about alternatives.

**A. THE EXPERIMENT PARTICIPATION OPTION:**

1. **Credit for Participation in Research**

Experiments vary in length, and credit will be awarded based on half-hour increments. For example, participating in an experiment that lasts 1 hour gives you 1 experimental credit. Participating in an experiment that lasts 2.5 hours gives you 2.5 credits. However, if an experiment lasts less than half an hour, you will still receive a .5 hour credit.

1. **Online Pretest Survey**

An online “Pretest” survey will be available to you from **Monday, September 8th at 8am to Sunday, September 21st at 9pm. It is HIGHLY recommended that you complete the online Pretest survey if you plan on participating in studies to earn extra credit.** **You will earn 1 hour of experimental credit by completing it.** During the survey, you will be asked to provide some preliminary information by filling out questionnaires. MOST of the research projects conducted at UW make use of this information in some way and will invite participants for their experiment based on information collected in the survey. Although completing the Pretest is not required for participating in studies, failure to complete it will make it extremely difficult to find studies to sign up for. Therefore, completing the online Pretest will ensure you are eligible for as many studies as possible.

If you need assistance accessing and/or completing the online Pretest, the research coordinator, Danielle Walters (dwalte14@uwyo.edu) will be available for assistance by appointment.

**NOTE:** If you are unsure about whether or not you will participate in research studies, it is recommended that you create a research account and participate in the online Pretest session.

**Participating in Experiments**

**Step One: Getting started**

You will need to create your own User ID and password for the UW Research Participation system. To do this, complete the following steps:

1) Go to the Research Participation website: <http://uwyo.sona-systems.com>

2) Click on “Request Account” on the right-hand side of the page.

3) Enter your Name (First and Last), User ID (you choose this), and email address into the lines provided. NOTE: Only *one* User ID may be assigned to an email account.

4) Select the course(s) you are completing the research for from the “Available Courses” and make sure they are then listed in the “Selected Courses” box.

5) Then press “Request Account”.

6) Your User ID and new password (randomly generated) will be sent to the email address you listed.

7) Retrieve your password and use it, along with your User ID, to log-in to the SONA System.

After logging in, the STUDY SIGN-UP icon is where you will find the experiments currently available for participation. Neither your instructor nor the psychology office will know when the experiments will be posted. Typically, a few studies will begin to appear at the beginning of the semester, and they will become more numerous as the semester progresses. However, many researchers will complete their data collection toward the end of the semester and the number of studies will likely diminish within the last three weeks of the semester.

\*New this year: If you have previously participated in research through SONA, you may keep your SONA account. HOWEVER, you must update your course(s) to reflect this semester’s enrollment.

**Step Two: Sign up for experiments**

1) Log in to the system (<http://uwyo.sona-systems.com>) using your User ID and password.

2) Click on the STUDY SIGN-UP icon to search experiments that are currently available for participation.

3) Click on an experiment of interest. *Before signing up for an experiment, read the description of the study and any information concerning participation restrictions.* For example, an experimenter may wish to study only males or females, or may exclude those who have participated in another specified study. If you fit the requirements, then you may sign up.

**VERY IMPORTANT –** The online sign-up system will email you a reminder regarding the *experiment, day,* and *time* for which you have signed up. It may also contain information about “where” the study is located (e.g., in a physical room or at a specific link). This is your reminder slip so that you will know when and where to go for the research. If you forget the time, date, or location of the research DO NOT call the psychology office, your instructor, or the research pool coordinator for this information. They do not know this information. You will need to log in to the system (<http://uwyo.sona-systems.com>) and find out this information under the MY SCHEDULE/CREDITS icon.

**Step Three: What to do when you get to the experiment session**

Unless the experiment description stated differently, you are not required to bring anything to the experiment. Show up on time; experimenters must follow tight schedules. You may not be admitted if you are late. Someone will greet you and explain the study. Your only duty is to try to the best of your abilities. Most experiments present little to no risk. However, you control your participation. If you feel that the experimenter is making unjustifiable demands on you or is asking you to do something that violates your principles, then **it is your right to stop the session.**

You will not know what the research entails until you show up for the experiment session. Psychology experiments vary considerably from one to the next. You may be asked to fill out questionnaires, work on problems or puzzles, or interact with other people in groups. Some experiments require the activity may be tape-recorded or videotaped. These recordings will never be used without your consent.

*What if I am there, but there is no experimenter?*

Wait at least 10 minutes after the time of your appointment. If no one has greeted you by this time (e.g., at a physical room or in a Zoom meeting room), then double-check your information about place/time. If the experimenter does not show up, email the research participation pool coordinator to verify that you did arrive at the scheduled time and place. If this is confirmed, you will receive credit for the study.

*What if I realize more than 24 hours* ***before*** *the experiment that I have to be somewhere else and cannot be at the experiment?*

Using the online system (<http://uwyo.sona-systems.com>), under the MY SCHEDULE/CREDITS icon, you may cancel your appointment. If you do not show up, you are taking spots away from your fellow students. You are also significantly inconveniencing the experimenter. **Please** change your appointment **at least 24 hours before** the appointment so that the appointment can be filled by someone else.

**Three-Strike Rule: *If you fail to show up for a study and fail to change your appointment, through SONA, an absolute minimum of 1 hour ahead of time, you receive a “strike.” If you receive three strikes for missed studies, you will no longer be able to participate in ANY studies.***

**Step Four: Getting credit for participation**

When the record of your participation is entered into the online system, you will receive an email notifying you of the credit. You may track your participation records by logging in (<http://uwyo.sona-systems.com>) and clicking the MY SCHEDULE/CREDITS icon. Records of your research participation are kept here. If you have questions about your research hours record, you can contact the research coordinator via email (dwalte14@uwyo.edu). **Your email notices are your insurance if someone makes a mistake with your records.**

YOU CAN ONLY PARTICIPATE IN A GIVEN STUDY ONCE. If you participate more than once, you *will not receive credit for both occasions.*

**IMPORTANT DEADLINES AND INFORMATION**

**LAST DAY TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH: *Friday, December 5th, 2025***

Questions? Please contact Danielle Walters via email: dwalte14@uwyo.edu

Additional copies of the “Research Participation Policies and Procedures” form is available on the UW Psychology Department webpage under “CLASSES THAT OFFER 2 or MORE EXTRA CREDIT POINTS” section (<http://www.uwyo.edu/psychology/undergraduate/sonainfo.html>) or may be obtained electronically from the research pool coordinator.

The University of Wyoming Department of Psychology experiment management system: <http://uwyo.sona-systems.com>

**FINAL REMINDER:** If you have signed-up for a research study and cannot make the appointment, **please** change your appointment **at least 24 hours before** the appointment.

**Three-Strike Rule: *If you fail to show up for 3 studies and fail to change your appointment an absolute minimum of 1 hour ahead of time through SONA for those missed studies, you will no longer be able to participate in ANY studies.***

**Pretest Survey Log-In Instructions**

***Pretest surveys MUST be completed by 9pm on Sunday, September 21st, 2025. The survey will be unavailable after that time.***

**IMPORTANT: These instructions assume that you have a functioning User ID.**

1. Go to the Research Participation homepage: <http://uwyo.sona-systems.com>
2. Using the User ID and password emailed to you by the system (that you created - check your email if you don’t already have this information), enter your User ID and password in the appropriate locations and select Log In.
3. Read the introductory text to the Pretest. This describes the Pretest, your rights and responsibilities, and what will be done with the data collected from your responses. If you agree to participate in the Pretest session, you must complete the test. Your ability to participate in studies throughout the semester may be determined by your responses on the Pretest. Therefore, it is important that you answer all questions.

1. Begin the Pretest.
2. At the end of each section, you will be asked to save your responses before the next section is displayed. Make sure to save your work early and often. Before the final submission of your test responses, you will have an opportunity to review your answers and change any as necessary.

For questions that require a free (typed) response and do not apply to you, simply type “none,” “does not apply,” “N/A,” or “0” as your response.

**If, during testing, you decide to discontinue the Pretest, log out of the system *before* the final review and submission of your test. None of your responses will be saved for data collection. However, if you elect to discontinue the Pretest, you will not receive credit for your participation (i.e., no partial credit is awarded for the Pretest).**

**Frequently Asked Questions**

***What are my rights as a research participant?***

Before each experiment, you will be given a brief description of the study. You will then be asked if you still wish to participate. This procedure is called “informed consent.” If you find nothing objectionable in the description, then you will be asked to indicate that you agree to participate. This does not mean you have signed away your rights, however. **You are free to stop the session at any point***.* You will still be given full credit for participating.

***How do I get a copy of my User ID and password if I forget them?***

Go to the Research Participation homepage (<http://uwyo.sona-systems.com>) and click on “Click Here to Retrieve It” located beneath the “Lost your password?” icon in the lower left hand corner of the screen. The dialog box will prompt you to enter your User ID (if you know it) or your email address. The system will email your log-in information (User ID and password) to that email address if it matches the one used to create your profile. Then check your email to retrieve your information.

***What if the email I used to create my profile is not my preferred email address?***

If you can access that email address for your log-in information, you can change your contact email address under “My Profile” once you are logged in.

***What if the email I used to create my profile is wrong or misspelled?***

If this occurs, you will need to re-create your account with a new User ID. Make sure to type in the correct email address and you should be able to create another account without difficulty. If this happens, contact the research pool coordinator Danielle Walters (dwalte14@uwyo.edu) and let her know that one of your accounts is wrong (make sure to identify the correct email address and User ID).

If you are still unable to access the system or were not able to create a new account, contact the research pool coordinator as soon as possible.

***What if I do not create my account before the Pretest? Will I still be able to participate in research studies and create an account for the research pool?***

If you do not create your account in time to take the Pretest, you will still be able to create a user account and sign up for experiments using the online system, although you will not be eligible for some experiments. Follow the instructions listed above.

***Can I access the SONA system on my cellphone?***

Yes! SONA released a mobile phone application at the beginning of 2013. It is currently available for Android and iOS operating systems. The mobile app works much like the full website, except that two-part studies are not currently supported. For this reason, it is recommended that you continue to check the full website for study opportunities if you do not find anything via the mobile application.