

Psychology Department Participant Pool Policies and Procedures

A. General Information

The Psychology Department Participant pool has been established for two major purposes: 1) to provide a ready source of research participants for psychology faculty and students who are conducting research and 2) to introduce students in introductory psychology to the conduct of psychological science.

While it is generally accepted that participation in a research study is beneficial to psychology students, Shepherd's faculty consider mere participation insufficient to serve the second purpose. Therefore, it is required that some substantive information about the subject of the study and its methods be provided to participants during the APA-required debriefing following participation.

The following language will be added to all PSYC 203 syllabi:

Research Participation

All students taking PSYC 203 Introduction to Psychology must complete a research participation requirement. This requirement may be completed in one of two ways. The first way is to participate in 2 units of research conducted by faculty, independent study students under the supervision of faculty, or students in the PSYC 485 Senior Thesis class. Psychology relies on empirical methods to test and refine its theories and exposure to the research process is considered an important learning experience for students. We understand, though, that some individuals may object to participation in research studies. The second way to fulfill the requirement is to read two articles and to write a two-page paper about each one. The articles must be chosen from the approved list which is posted on the Department Web site (<http://shepherd.edu/psychweb>) and on the Participant Pool bulletin board outside White Hall room 218. Whichever option you choose to complete, you must complete it by pre-registration each semester or a registration hold will be placed on your account and you will not be able to register for the next semester's classes. Signup sheets and complete participation policies and procedures may be found on the Participant Pool Bulletin Board.

B. Credits and Penalties

Studies will be assigned unit value based on the time required for the participant to complete the study. This includes time for instructions, time to complete the actual study procedures, and time for an oral debriefing. Unit values will be assigned in ½ hour increments, rounded up. By way of example, if your study requires 45 minutes, it would be assigned a unit value of 1 hour. Studies that require more than 2 hours to complete may not use the Participant Pool

A student who cancels a research appointment within 24 hours of the appointment time or who fails to report to the session, or who is more than 10 minutes late to the appointment will not receive credit for participation and will receive a 1 unit penalty. In other words, a student who misses a single appointment would then be required to complete 3 units of participation credit. This penalty will not apply to documented emergency situations (e.g., medical emergency, sudden death in the family). Documentation must be presented to the Participant Pool Coordinator. “I forgot I signed up” or “I forgot I had a doctor’s appointment at the same time” are not valid excuses.

Researchers have an obligation to set a good example for the student participants. If a researcher cancels a session within 24 hours of the scheduled time, fails to report to the session, or is more than 10 minutes late, the student will receive credit for participation in that study, but does not have to participate. Each such instance will be reported to the Department Chair. Two such instances may result in loss of Participant Pool privileges.

C. Responsibilities of Researchers

1. The first step in applying for access to the participant pool is to have your project approved by the IRB. Faculty and independent study students should see the IRB Web site at <http://www.shepherd.edu/irbweb/> for the required forms and procedures. Students in PSYC 485 will submit their IRB forms to the course instructor for approval by the department.
2. Once IRB approval is obtained, the researcher should submit proof of IRB approval and the Application to Use the Participant Pool to the Participant Pool Coordinator. This application must include the information that will be used in the oral debriefing (see item 4 below).
3. Upon approval, your project will be assigned a study number and credit value. You can then post your signup sheet on the Participant Pool Bulletin Board. Your signup sheet should contain your name and contact information, the title of the study, and the days, times, and places that the study will be conducted. You are responsible for monitoring signups for your study.
4. Each session should end with an oral debriefing. One objective of the participant pool is that students should learn something about psychological research. The debriefing should include, in language that a PSYC 203 student will understand, information about the purpose of the study and something about the methods used in the study to accomplish that purpose. The participant should have the opportunity to ask questions about the study and each person who will be collecting data on a project should be able to answer basic questions about the research. In addition, conformance with the American Psychological Association’s Ethics Code requires that the debriefing should reveal any deceptions involved in the research, should alleviate any negative cognitive, affective, or motivational impact the research could have on the participant, and it should convey respect for the participant as an individual and appreciation of

his/her time and effort.

5. You should return the names of participants who do or do not show up to your study to the Participant Pool Coordinator within 24 hours of their scheduled session. The list should indicate who showed up and should receive credit and who did not and should be penalized. Failure to provide credit information in a timely manner may result in the loss of participant pool privileges.

D. Responsibilities of Participants

1. Students in PSYC 203 are responsible for making sure that they meet the Participation requirement before the pre-registration date. Failure to meet this obligation will result in a registration hold and the student will not be able to register for the following semester until the requirement is met.
2. Students must visit the Participant Pool Bulletin Board to sign up for studies (or to identify the articles to be read for the papers). Students are responsible for writing down the name of the researcher, the researcher's contact info and where and when the study will take place (all of this information will be listed on the signup sheet). Studies may vary in value and it is up to the student to attain the required 2 units of credit.
3. Students must report to their research sessions on time. Cancellation of a research appointment within 24 hours of the appointment time, failure to report at the assigned time, or tardiness of 10 minutes or more will result in a 1 unit penalty (see section B).
4. If a researcher cancels within 24 hours of the agreed upon time, fails to report to the session, or is more than 10 minutes late, the student should report the incident to the Participant Pool Coordinator within 24 hours so that proper credit may be assigned (see section B).

E. Responsibilities of the Participant Pool Coordinator

1. The Participant Pool Coordinator will perform the recordkeeping associated with the participant pool. By the 5th week of each semester the Coordinator will request from the Registrar's office a listing of all students enrolled in all sections of PSYC 203. The Coordinator will also record all credit and penalty information for the students and submit hold information to the Registrar before the beginning of the pre-registration period. Finally, the Coordinator will report to the Department Chair any researcher who fails to meet his or her obligations as outlined previously.