

# Psychology 101 Research Participation Requirement

## Contact and Helpful Links

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**RPG Information and Resources Website:** <https://arts-sciences.buffalo.edu/psychology/info/current-students/psy-101.html>

**Sona-Systems Website:** <https://buffalo.sona-systems.com/>

## The Research Requirement: All PSY 101 Students Must Earn 5 Research Credits

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of the research requirement is to acquaint psychology students with psychological research. To get a true sense of psychological science, it is imperative that you become familiar with the research process.

### **How to Fulfill the Research Requirement:**

There are two ways to fulfill the requirement: (1) by serving as a research participant in studies being conducted in the Psychology Department, and/or (2) by writing research reports on psychological research published in scholarly journals. You may choose either option (or any combination of both options). However, *the research report is the only option available to students under 18 years of age.*

### **Retaking PSY 101?**

Even if you have taken PSY 101 before and earned credits or completed the requirement, you still must earn all 5 credits again (*during the current semester*). Your previous credits do not apply.

### **Impact on Course Grade:**

Students who complete the research requirement (*i.e., earn all 5 credits*) will receive whatever grade they have earned for the course. In other words, as long as the requirement is completed, your grade will not be affected. However, students who do not complete the research requirement (*i.e., earn less than 5 credits*) but are otherwise passing, will receive an Incomplete grade for the course.

### **Students Who Earn an Incomplete Grade:**

Students who earn an incomplete grade due to failure to complete the research requirement will have the opportunity to complete the requirement during subsequent semesters. Those who complete the research requirement (*i.e., earn their remaining credits*) within one year of getting the Incomplete will receive the grade they would have otherwise earned in the class. Students who do not complete the research requirement within one year of getting the Incomplete will receive an adjusted default grade. The default grade reduces the grade the student would have otherwise earned in the class by one full letter grade, as follows: A to B, A- to B-, B+ to C+, B to C, B- to C-, C+ to D+, C to D, C- to D, D+ to D, D to F. At any time before the one year is up, students may elect to accept the Incomplete default grade using a Grade Retrieval Form.

### **Sona-Systems Account (Checking Credits):**

All students will be given an account on the Sona-Systems website. This is the website that is used to sign up for experiments (*see Research Participation Option below*). Importantly, this is also how you will check your credit status, so you can see how many credits you have earned (*from completing either the experiment participation or research report option*). You will receive an email confirmation when your account has been activated (at the end of the 1st week of classes). Please note that even though students under 18 will be given an account, they will not be given access to experiments (*until they become 18*). Your user ID is your UBIT name (*i.e., the first part of your UB email address*) and your password is your UB person number. If you are re-taking PSY 101, your User ID is the same, and your password is whatever you set it to the previous semester. If you have trouble logging in, please email the RPG Coordinator. You should pay close attention to your credit total so that you make sure to successfully complete the requirement (*i.e., earn all 5 credits*). You can check your credit information by selecting the "My Schedule/Credits" option on the main menu. Any credit discrepancies should be resolved in a timely manner (*see Resolving Credit Discrepancies for each option below*). Issues reported after the end of the semester cannot be resolved.

### **Deadline for Completing Credits:**

Both experiment participation and research reports must be completed by the last day of university classes (not including finals week). Specifically, experiments must be completed no later than 5pm and reports must be submitted no later than 5pm following the submission instructions set by your instructor.

## The Research Participation Option

### **General Information:**

Participating in experiments will give you the opportunity to become immersed in the research process and allow you to experience things from the participant's perspective. Participation in all experiments is strictly voluntary. You will be informed of the experimental procedures at the start of every study. You have the right to withdraw from any experiment, the right to refuse answering any questions, and the right to withdraw your data in any

experiment without penalty. In order to ensure that a high level of ethical standards for research procedures are met, all of the experiments offered through the Psychology Department RPG must have been reviewed and approved by the university's Social and Behavioral Sciences Institutional Review Board.

**Age Requirement (You must be at least 18 years old):**

For legal reasons, the research participation option is not available to students under 18 years of age. However, if you turn 18 during the semester, you will be given access to experiments and permitted to sign up beginning the day you turn 18.

**Credits Earned:**

You will earn 0.5 credits for each 30 minutes of participation. Experiments of varying time increments (e.g., 30 minutes, 1 hour, etc.) will be offered.

**How to Participate:**

You will sign up for experiments on the Sona-Systems website. You may choose whichever studies you like from a list of available studies. This list as well as available timeslots may change on a daily basis, so it is important to check the website regularly for new experiments. Please only sign up for a particular study if you meet the eligibility requirements of that study. You will be able to log in and start signing up after the 1st week of classes (after your account has been activated). Experiments begin on the 2nd week of classes. Please see the Sona-Systems Information Handout For Students, located on the RPG information and resources website, for specific instructions on how to log in, sign up for studies, and view your appointments and research credits.

**Important RPG Policies for Experiments:**

**Be Punctual for Experiments:**

Experimenters often cannot accommodate late-arriving participants. If you are late (even sometimes less than 5 minutes), it is likely you will be unable to participate in the study, and you will not get credit. Also, make sure you are in the correct location; it is your fault if you cannot participate because you are in the wrong place.

You should print a copy (or have it on your phone) of the study confirmation email and bring it with you so that you know when and where your experiment will take place.

**Participant Lateness or Absence:**

If you are late or fail to show up for an experiment, it will be counted as an absence unless you have appropriate documentation. There is no penalty for being absent. However, any unexcused absences mean you will not get the 1 credit bonus for perfect attendance (see below). Additionally, if you receive four or more unexcused absences, you will be unable to complete the experiment participation option and will have to complete the requirement through the research report option.

**Experimenter Lateness or Cancellation:**

If you arrive on time for your scheduled appointment and there is no experimenter, you must wait for 10 minutes past the appointment time. You should knock on the door to make sure they are not there (unless otherwise noted on signs for the room or study). Then, be sure to email the experimenter and explain what happened (provide as many details as possible). You will be given a 0.5 credit for any appointment that is missed by the experimenter, cancelled by the experimenter less than 24 hours prior, or that fails to occur due to technical problems.

**Participant Cancellation:**

Before signing up for studies, ensure that you are able to attend the session (i.e., check your schedule). However, if you find that you are unable to attend the session, you may cancel the appointment as long as it is more than 24 hours in advance (see the Sona-Systems Information Handout for Students). You will not be permitted to cancel online less than 24 hours prior to the appointment time. This option will simply not be available in Sona-Systems. Therefore, it is important that you are very careful when signing up for studies within 24 hours, as you will not be able to cancel them (even if it was an accident, something else came up, or you realize that you are not eligible). In cases of an emergency (i.e., illness, car accident, etc.), please email or call the experimenter (not the RPG Coordinator) prior to the session if possible, or 24 hours within the scheduled session; experimenter email addresses are listed in the study information. If you can provide documentation (i.e., a doctor's note, police report, etc.), you will be excused from the absence.

**Resolving Credit Discrepancies:**

It is possible that you may encounter a problem with your credit (i.e., you did not receive credit yet or you were marked as an absence when you actually participated). Please wait at least 24 hours before reporting any credit discrepancies; sometimes they get taken care of at the following day. After you have waited at least 24 hours, you should email the experimenter in charge of the study (not the RPG Coordinator); experimenter email addresses are listed in the study information. In your email, please provide as many details as possible to help the experimenter resolve your situation. If the experimenter fails to respond and/or you are unsatisfied with the resolution, then please contact the RPG Coordinator in a timely manner (preferably within a week) for assistance.

## The Research Report Option

### **General Information:**

Reading original, peer-reviewed research articles is a skill that will enhance your understanding of the scientific process. This option involves selecting a recently published, scholarly journal article, reading it, and answering a series of questions regarding what you read.

### **Credits Earned:**

You will earn 1 credit for each report you successfully complete. Reports that are done incorrectly (i.e., not following instructions) will not earn credit. Partial credit will not be given.

### **How to Complete Reports:**

Instructions for completing research reports can be found in the Research Report Instructions handout, located on RPG website. This document will give you a step-by-step, detailed set of instructions regarding how to complete each report. Please keep in mind that you must follow the provided instructions very carefully. Failure to adhere to the instructions will result in not receiving credit. In addition, all reports must be written in your own words; plagiarism of any kind (e.g., *copying directly from the article, inadequate paraphrasing*) will automatically result in not receiving credit and possibly academic penalty.

### **Resolving Credit Discrepancies:**

Instructors are in charge of assigning credit for the research reports. If there are any problems with your credit, please email your PSY 101 instructor (*not the RPG Coordinator*). Keep in mind that instructors may receive many reports at the end of the semester, so please be patient in waiting for your credit to appear on the Sona-Systems website. You can submit reports at any time prior to the deadline. Thus, it may be beneficial to submit a few reports early to ensure that you are doing them correctly.

## Pre-Screening Survey

### **Purpose:**

Researchers are often interested in having certain types of people participate in their experiments. In such cases, they need to collect information about students to see if they are qualified for their studies. Therefore, students are asked to complete a pre-screening survey in which they answer various questions about themselves. The survey will consist of approximately 300 multiple-choice or brief free-response questions. Participation in the pre-screening survey is strictly voluntary, but please note that completing it will allow you to be eligible for a good deal more experiments throughout the semester.

### **Age Requirement:**

You must be at least 18 years of age to complete the pre-screening survey. If you turn 18 during the semester, you will be given the opportunity to complete the pre-screening beginning the day you turn 18.

### **Time Requirement and Credit Earned:**

Completing the pre-screening survey will take approximately 1 hour for which you will earn 1 credit.

### **Additional Information:**

The first time you log on to the Sona-Systems website, you will be prompted to complete the pre-screening survey. You will not be given access to the experiments until you have either completed or declined participation in the survey. If you choose to decline your participation in the survey, you will not have the option to complete it at a later date. If you do choose to participate in the survey, you will need to complete it all at once. If you exit early, your responses will not be saved. Thus, it is a good idea to set aside 1 hour the first time you log on so you can complete the survey. To become eligible for more experiments, you should complete the survey early in the semester. When completing the survey, please keep in mind that you have the option to decline to answer any question without penalty.

## Perfect Attendance 1 Credit Bonus

If you reach the end of the semester and show up, on time, for any and all experiments, then you will be awarded a 1 credit bonus. This means that if you complete 4 credits by the end of the semester, either by showing up on time to all your appointments and/or doing research reports (which do not allow the option to be absent), you will earn 1 free credit as a bonus (bringing you up to the 5 required credits). In short, if you have perfect attendance at your experiments and/or write research reports, you only have to earn 8 credits through your own efforts.

### **How do you know if you got the 1 credit bonus?**

You will receive the 1 credit bonus as long as you do not have any unexcused absences from experiments. Absences that are excused by the experimenter (see above) will not impact the 1 credit bonus. To see if you have any unexcused absences, go to the Sona-Systems website and select the "My Schedule/Credits" option on the main menu and then look under the "Credit Status" column. If it says "Failure to Appear – Unexcused" for any of your appointments, you will not get the 1 credit bonus. If it does not say this (i.e., you were given credit or you had an excused absence), then you will get the 1 credit bonus. The 1 credit bonus credit will be automatically applied to your Sona-Systems account at the end of the semester (the day after the last day of regular classes).

## **Extra Credit in PSY 101**

Some instructors may also allow students to participate beyond the research requirements for extra credit. You must check with your individual instructor to see if you can earn extra credit in this manner. If so, the extra credit will involve participating in experiments or writing research reports (see options above) beyond the required 5 credits. Each additional credit (above the 5 required) will give students 1 additional point towards their final grades (awarded in 0.5 credit increments). If your instructor allows the extra credit, each student will be allowed to complete a total of 3 extra credit (that is, you can earn up to 8 credits in total) assignments. Thus, a student with an 85% average who completes all three extra credit assignments will raise their average to 88%. Again, it is up to each individual instructor as to whether to allow extra credit in this manner, so make sure to check with your instructor before completing the extra credit.

## **Additional Information, Questions, Concerns, or Complaints**

Please contact the RPG Coordinator for any questions and/or problems. Additional information and all RPG documents can be obtained on the RPG information and resources website. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in a research project or concerns or complaints about the research, you may contact (anonymously, if you wish) the research participant advocate at 716-888-4845 or [researchadvocate@buffalo.edu](mailto:researchadvocate@buffalo.edu).