SONA-SYSTEMS INSTRUCTIONS FOR STUDENTS

Logging In

You can find the login page at:

http://buffalo.sona-systems.com

Your User Name is your UBIT name (i.e., your email name, the part before the @buffalo.edu) and your password is your UB person number.

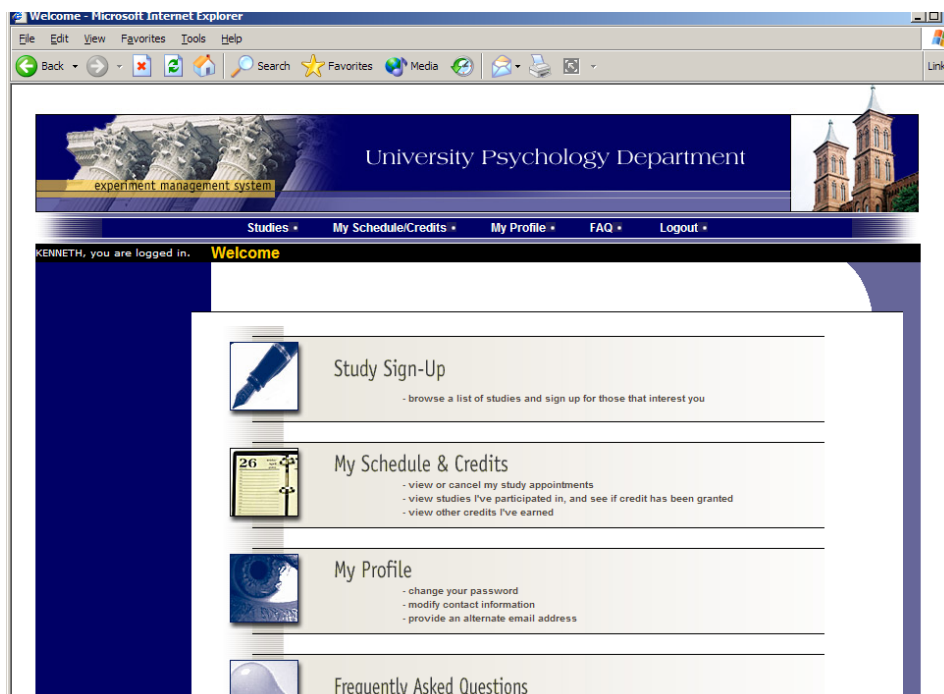After you login, you will see the Main Menu.

Figure - Main Menu

Click on My Profile from the top toolbar or Main Menu to update your personal information. It is important that the system has your preferred email address, as you will be emailed when you have received credit for a study and confirming that you have signed up for a study.

You have two choices for your email address. When you update your profile, you will see a box where you may provide an alternate email address. If you provide such an address (this could be a Hotmail account, for instance), this is the address where any notifications will be sent, and this is also the address that will be displayed to researchers. If you do not supply an alternate email address, the system will automatically use your UB email.

Viewing Studies

To view a list of available studies, click on Studies from the top toolbar or Main Menu. You will see a list of studies. A brief description of each study will be listed, as well as any special requirements that may restrict your eligibility to participate in the study.
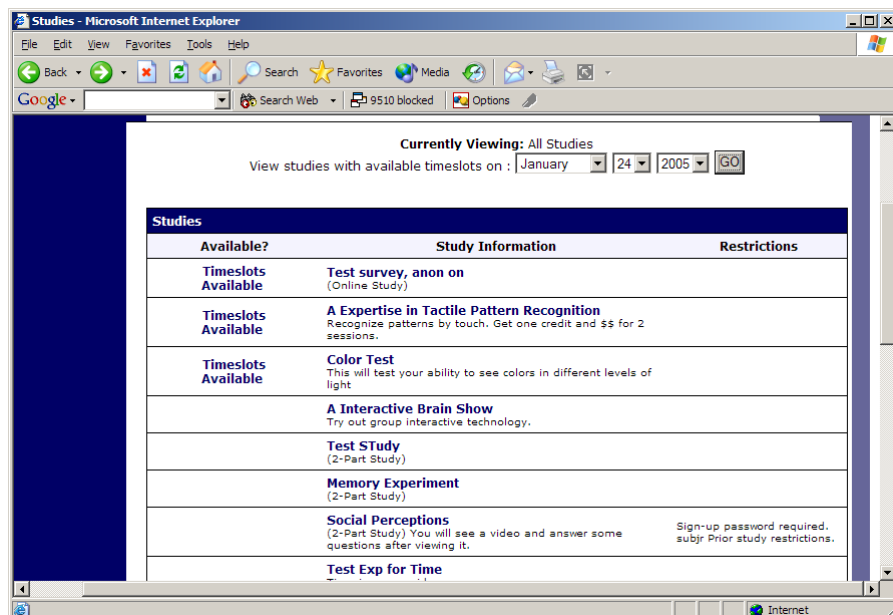

Figure - Viewing Studies

Studies that currently have available participation times (timeslots) will have TIMESLOTS AVAILABLE listed next to the name of the study. If no studies have available timeslots, you may want to logon to the system a few days later to see if new timeslots have been added. You may also select a specific date to view studies with available timeslots on that date.

To view more information about a study, click on the name of the study.

Signing Up For Studies

To sign up to participate in a study, find the study you would like to participate in (see Viewing Studies in this documentation). Click on the study name for more information. You will see a list of any special restrictions or eligibility requirements, as well as a contact person if you have questions about the study.

The study may have other restrictions listed as Eligibility Requirements. An example of an eligibility requirement is "Left-handed people only." If listed, then the system does *not* enforce this restriction, but you should only sign up for the study if you meet this restriction. If you sign up for the study and you do not meet the restrictions, you will likely be asked to leave the study and will not receive credit.

If the study is not an online study, then the sign-up and cancellation deadlines for the study will be listed, and those are based on the date of each timeslot. All cancellations must be made more than 24 hours before the scheduled session.

Once you have determined you meet all the requirements, click on View Timeslots for This Study and you will see a list of available timeslots. Choose a timeslot that is convenient for you, and click Sign Up.

After you click Sign Up, you will see information displayed confirming the time and location of the study you plan to participate in. You will receive an email confirmation as well. You are now signed up for the study.

Canceling a Sign-Up

If you need to cancel a timeslot you have signed up for, you can do this from the My Schedule and Credits page. Choose the My Schedule/Credits option from the top toolbar or Main Menu.

You will see listed all the studies you have signed up for, as well as those you have completed (see the Tracking Your Progress section of this documentation for more information).

Studies you have signed up for that you are allowed to cancel will have a Cancel button next to them. There is a time limit before the study is to occur, when it is too late to cancel. This restriction maybe listed at the bottom of the page, or can be found by clicking on the study name and viewing the study details.

Please keep in mind that all cancellations must be made more than 24 hours before the scheduled session. The system will not give you the option to cancel less than 24 hours before the study begins.

Online Survey Studies

Some studies may be online survey studies that are administered in the system. If you sign up for one of these studies, you will be taken immediately to the survey. As soon as you complete the survey, you will receive credit.

You may withdraw from the survey at any time, by clicking the Withdraw button on the top right corner of the screen. When you withdraw, you have an option to withdraw without the chance to receive credit, or with the chance to receive credit. The difference is that if you withdraw without the chance to receive credit, then your sign-up will be completely deleted from the system. This is useful if you simply changed your mind about participating in the survey, but might like to participate in it again at a later time.

If you choose to withdraw with the option to receive credit, then your sign-up will be logged and the researcher will be notified of the withdrawal, but you will not be granted credit immediately. The researcher will give you partial credit for your participation based on how much of the experiment you completed. You will not have the opportunity to participate in this study again. With this withdrawal option, you are not obligated to provide any explanation of why you are choosing to withdraw, but you may provide an explanation if you like, and this information will be sent to the researcher when they are notified of your withdrawal.

With either withdrawal option, all the survey responses you provided are permanently deleted at the time you withdraw.

Tracking Your Progress

You may track your progress at any time by choosing the My Schedule/Credits option from the top toolbar or Main Menu.

When you view this page, you will see at the top a list of the number of credits you are required to earn, and how many you have earned so far. Below that, if you have signed up for any studies, those are listed as well. In the list of studies, you will see information about your credit status.
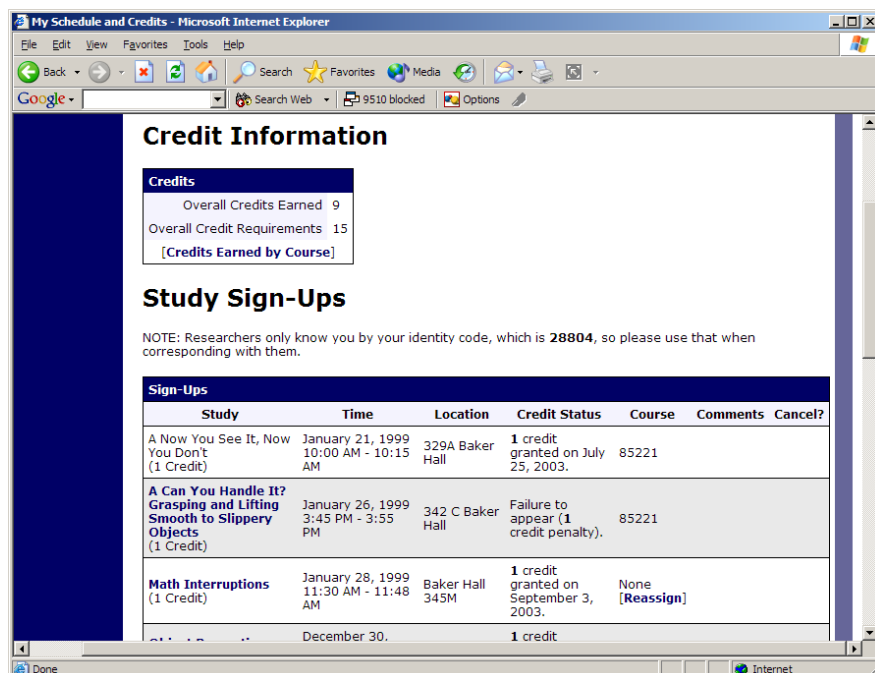

Figure - Viewing Your Progress

If you failed to appear for a study, it will be displayed in your progress. MISSING A STUDY WILL MAKE YOU INELIGIBLE FOR THE PERFECT ATTENDANCE BONUS CREDIT.

Non-study credit (also listed) is granted for completing the alternate assignment (i.e., research reports).

Online Prescreens

You will be asked to take an online prescreen before you use the system. You have the option to opt out of the entire prescreen and/or individual questions. You should realize that declining to participate in prescreening or certain questions may affect your eligibility for some studies, so participation is strongly encouraged. In addition, you will earn 1 credit for participating in the prescreening survey. All questions are either multiple-choice or fill-in (free-entry) answer, so it should be rather easy to complete. Start the prescreening survey when you have an hour of uninterrupted time to complete it. Setting aside 1 hour is very important because you will have to do it all in one sitting.

Frequently Asked Questions

Immediately after I login, as soon as I click on any menu option, I am taken back to the login page and I see a message that my authentication has expired. What does this mean?

Your web browser is not properly configured to accept cookies. You should turn on cookies in your web browser, use a different web browser (for example, try Firefox if you are currently using Internet Explorer), or try a different computer. Detailed instructions can be found if you go to the site and enter the url "cookie_help.asp" in place of "default.asp" in the address bar of the browser, when you are on the front page of the site.

Another easy thing to try is simply to use another computer. Usually the computers in university computer labs are configured correctly.

I participated in a study, but I have yet to receive credit. How do I receive credit?

The researcher must grant you credit. This is usually done shortly after your participation. If it has been some time and you have still not received credit, contact the researcher.

Who can see the information about my sign-ups? I don't want everyone to know which studies I signed up for.

Only the researcher and principal investigator of the study may see that you have signed up for it, along with the subject pool administrator. No other users, including other researchers or your instructor, may see this information.

How do I change the email address where email notifications from the system are sent?

Provide an alternate Email address and notifications will be sent there. See the Email Address Options section of this documentation for more information.

I wrote a research report instead of participating in studies. How do I know I have completed my requirements?

View the My Schedule and Credits page and any non-study credit will also be listed there. Keep in mind that it may take some time for the research reports to be graded and added to the system.

I noticed that with some studies, I can sign up for them again even if I participated before, while others don't allow for this. Why is this?

Researchers can choose if their studies allow you to participate more than once. Not all studies allow you to participate more than once.