Preamble

Research is at the heart of the Department of Psychology’s mission. The Psychology Participant Pool is an essential and valuable component of the Department’s teaching and research. The advancement of psychology depends on the participation of investigators, research assistants, and human participants. We invite undergraduates like you to become involved in Departmental research in one or more of these roles: by volunteering to be a research participant, working in a research laboratory as a paid or volunteer research assistant, or enrolling in an independent research course. By volunteering, you can make a contribution to fundamental knowledge in psychology and human nature, learn more about Departmental research and how it is conducted, as well as earn extra credits in your courses.

Overview

Starting in 2017-2018, the Psychology Participant Pool will allow students in the Department of Psychology’s 2nd year courses to receive academic credit towards an eligible course (or courses if they are enrolled in more than one) in return for participating in studies conducted by researchers in the Department. Instructors will decide on an individual basis whether or not to include their course. If you participate in the Psychology Participant Pool, for every half hour of research completed, you can increase your final mark in an eligible course by 0.5%. Individual instructors can decide the amount of credit allowed for their course from a minimum of 2% up to a maximum of 5%.

If you are enrolled in more than one eligible PSYC 200-level course, you can complete studies toward each course. However, the same hours of research participation cannot be applied to more than one course, and you cannot complete the same experiment multiple times for multiple courses.

- Course instructors will notify students at the beginning of the semester if they are permitting participant pool participation for extra credit.
- Credit will not change a failing mark to a passing mark.
- Credits expire at the end of each term, and once credits have been sent to instructors at the end of the semester, they cannot be transferred to another course.
- Note that some courses may have restrictions (see information provided by course instructors).

How to Sign Up

Studies will be listed on SONA, and you will receive an email with the information you need to register your account on SONA after the end of the drop/add period. Expect the email around the middle of the third week of the semester. For more details on registration, go to 2:31 of the SONA instructional video available at https://youtu.be/_1OnT2ZU6QQ.

As part of your registration on SONA, you can complete four demographic questions. These questions may be used by some researchers to limit access to their studies on SONA only to students who belong to certain groups (e.g., women only). In addition, during the first week of the semester, you will be emailed a link to a separate online prescreening questionnaire that contains more than just demographic questions. You can complete the SONA prescreening at any time (for more details, go to 8:45 on the video), but the larger prescreening questionnaire will be due by the end of the drop/add period (second Friday of the term). If you complete the larger prescreening questionnaire online, you often become eligible for additional studies, and those researchers will contact you directly to find a time to participate. However, please note that you will never have to sign up for the offered projects; completing the prescreening simply gives you additional opportunities to complete your credits as you prefer.

For more details on how to sign up for studies, go to 3:41 of the instructional video. When you sign up for a study, if you are enrolled in more than one eligible course, you will select the course toward which your research participation will be credited (for more details, go to 7:07 on the instructional video).
Why participate?

IT’S EDUCATIONAL: You will get more experience with how behavioural research is conducted, which will give you greater insight about the real life process underlying the studies you learn about in your 200-level PSYC courses. If you’re interested, researchers will share results once studies have finished: just send them an email to find out more! Participating in research also is a great way to determine if you would like to be involved in conducting research projects in your third and fourth years – feel free to ask the researcher about opportunities in the future to volunteer or do a special directed lab course (PSYC 570/575).

YOU’LL RECEIVE BONUS CREDIT TO YOUR FINAL MARK(S): For every half hour of research participation, you can increase your final mark in one eligible course by 0.5% for a minimum of 2%. Individual instructors can decide the amount of credit allowed for their course up to a maximum of 5%. For example, if your final mark in a class is a 78%, and you complete 2 hours of research credits, your final mark will be an 80%, and your final grade on your transcript will be an A- instead of a B+.

YOU MAKE RESEARCH POSSIBLE: Student participation in research is crucial for the researchers conducting these studies. Without participation, researchers can’t run the studies that help us answer important psychology questions. The goal of the Department of Psychology is not just to educate students but to be a leader in creating knowledge and advancing the field.

What if I don’t want to participate?

Participation in research is entirely voluntary. If you want to earn credit but don’t want to participate in a particular study, students in eligible PSYC 200-level courses have the option of completing an alternative assignment instead. For the alternative assignment, researchers either will offer a walk-through of their experiment, or they will have you to read an article or blog post, listen to a short podcast, or watch a short video and then answer questions about it. Researchers of the particular study for which you wish to get credit will administer the simulation (NOT your course instructor -- course instructors are not involved in the crediting for studies or alternative assignments). You must contact the researcher of a particular study (see the study’s contact information on SONA) before the last week of classes for the semester to complete the alternative assignment option. Although the length of studies will vary, the alternative assignment will take less time (approximately 30 minutes), so you will earn 0.5% for each alternative assignment that you complete.