

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.

B. For PSYC 101 Instructors

1. The following language will be added to all PSYC 101 syllabi:

Research Participation

All students taking PSYC 101 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 3 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 three 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 333. Participation will count for 10% of your final grade in this class and, whichever option you choose to complete, you must complete it by last day of classes. Signup sheets and complete participation policies and procedures may be found on the Participant Pool Bulletin Board.

2. Research participation should count for a total of 10% of the course grade and this should be reflected on your syllabus. A student who completes the entire requirement will earn the 10% while one who does not complete the requirement or only partially fulfills the requirement will not. You will receive periodic reports from the Participant Pool Coordinator regarding the standing of your students.

C. For PSYC 101 Students

1. Students in PSYC 101 are responsible for making sure that they meet the research participation requirement by the last day of classes. Failure to meet this requirement will result in one full letter grade reduction (10%) in your final grade. Students can satisfy this requirement by either completing 3 units of research participation OR by reading 3 research articles selected from the approved list (<http://www.shepherd.edu/psychweb/participation.html>) and submitting a two-page paper about each one to the Participant Pool Coordinator. These articles are on reserve in the library under the name "Psychology Department." You may mix and match to meet this requirement. In other words, you may choose to participate in two hours worth of research studies and then read one article and write a two-page paper on the article. **The law states that students must be at least 18 years old in order to participate in the research studies. If you are under 18 years old, you must choose to read three articles and write three papers to fulfill the research participation requirement for the class.**
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 sign-up sheet). Studies may vary in value and it is up to the student to attain the required 3 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 regardless of the value of the study. In other words, a student who misses a single appointment would then be required to complete 4 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.
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 will receive credit for participation in that session, but will not be required to make up the session. The student should report the incident to the Participant Pool Coordinator within 24 hours so that proper credit may be assigned.

D. For Researchers

1. 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 4 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.

2. Responsibilities of Researchers

- a) 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 484 or PSYC 485 will submit their IRB forms to the course instructor for approval by the department¹.
- b) 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 d below).
- c) 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 outside White Hall room 333. 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.
- d) 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 101 student will understand, information about the purpose of the study and something about the methods used in the study to accomplish that purpose. The

¹ During the fall semester 2011 Shepherd will be constituting a new IRB with new policies. Please check with your instructor for the correct procedure to follow for IRB approval.

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.

- e) 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.

E. For the Coordinator

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 101. The Coordinator will also record all credit and penalty information for the students and will periodically report that information to the PSYC 101 instructors. Finally, the Coordinator will report to the Department Chair any researcher who fails to meet his or her obligations as outlined previously.