



UWSP Department of Psychology

PARTICIPANT POOL POLICIES



Abstract: This document provides an overview of the Department of Psychology Participant Pool. The rules and guidelines for pool are presented in terms of the underlying educational goals of the PSYC 110 Research Requirement and the ethical guidelines of human research. All researchers wishing to use the pool must abide by these policies and procedures.

Contact Information: Dr. Craig A. Wendorf, Participant Pool Coordinator, D240 Science Center, UWSP, Phone: 715-346-2304, Email: cwendorf@uwsp.edu

Overview of the Participant Pool and Its Policies

What is the Purpose of the Participant Pool?

The Department of Psychology Participant Pool is both a vehicle for researchers to have continual access to human participants and for students to learn about the conduct of research. It is important to note that the first purpose does not have priority over the second; in other words, *researchers should understand that their research studies must, in some way, constitute a potentially positive learning experience for the students who serve as participants*. Thus, all of the policies described below follow from this statement of purpose.

Who is in the Participant Pool?

The pool consists of all students enrolled in "Psychology 110: Introduction to Psychology." *As part of their course requirements, these students are expected to earn 2 hours worth of research credit*. Unlike many other course requirements, these credits are NOT factored into the students' final course grade; rather, students who do not complete the requirement are given an "Incomplete" in the course until they complete the research requirement.

Though students must earn research credit to receive a grade for the course, they do not need to be a member of the pool in order to satisfy the requirement. Students may also satisfy the requirement through an equitable alternative activity – completing a journal article summary – that achieves the same basic educational goal and involves similar time, effort, and benefit to the students.

Importantly, no other students or classes are or will be incorporated into the pool. This means that students from other classes cannot participate in these studies (for course credit or otherwise). Similarly, students who have taken PSYC 110 in the past but are not currently enrolled in PSCY 110 may not participate in these studies.

What is the Purpose of These Policies?

These guidelines are for all researchers who use the Department of Psychology Participant Pool. The policies and procedures exist to assure that human participants are treated with respect and that departmental educational goals are met. *Every researcher who uses the pool must always be concerned about the safety and well-being of the participants*.

All researchers must abide by the guidelines and procedures governing the use of the Department of Psychology Participant Pool. They also must comply with the guidelines set forth by the American Psychological Association's Code of Ethics in general and the local Institutional Review Board's guidelines in particular. Investigators who violate any of the above policies and procedures will lose the privilege of using the participant pool for a period of time determined by the Coordinator, and also may be subject to sanctions imposed by the Institutional Review Board.

Gaining Access to the Sign-Up System

What Must Be Done Before Gaining Access to the Pool?

All research using the pool must first pass through the Institutional Review Board for the treatment of human subjects. Faculty and students wishing to conduct research must complete online training and the necessary paperwork for a research project involving human subjects. The training program, the guidelines for human research, and the necessary forms are available online at <http://www.uwsp.edu/special/irb/>

In order to maintain research participation as an educational experience, it is necessary that students be educated in some way about research in general and/or about the specific research in which they have just participated. *Therefore, all research involving the participant pool must include a debriefing of some sort (either written or verbal).*

Please note that the debriefing requirement may be a requirement above and beyond the guidelines of the Institutional Review Board. Researchers should pay special attention to this policy as it requires forethought; *debriefing procedures must be clearly outlined in the researcher's Institutional Review Board materials.*

How Do Researchers Get Access to the Participant Pool?

The participant pool is routinely accessible to only full-time faculty in the Department of Psychology. With the co-sponsorship of a Department of Psychology faculty member, adjunct instructors and undergraduate students may address requests for use of the pool to the Coordinator.

The Coordinator provides an orientation for faculty and student research assistants. Orientation sessions may be given individually or to groups of interested parties early in the semester. These sessions review the guidelines outlined in this document and set up accounts for the online sign-up and reporting system. *All researchers must complete an orientation session to be authorized to conduct research using the participant pool.*

Authorization lasts only until the end of the current semester. Thus, all researchers who are authorized to use the system in a given semester will lose their authorization at the end of that semester, and must re-register in each succeeding semester. Authorization is not automatically extended from one semester to the next.

How Do Researchers Make a Study Available for Sign-Up?

When a researcher wishes to make a study available for student sign-up, the researcher should submit the study on the sign-up system and contact the Coordinator to get approval of the study for the web site. Students will not be able to sign-up for that study until activated by the Coordinator.

Once the study has been approved by the Coordinator, researchers may begin setting participation times. Please note that room availability needs to be cleared with the appropriate supervisor – lab reservations should be made with supervising faculty and classroom reservations should be made with the Psychology Department Assistant.

As a general rule, no new studies will be approved following Friday of Week 13 of the semester. *The participant pool closes each semester at the end of the last day of instruction (i.e., Friday of Week 15) before the final exam period begins.* This means that the pool may not be used for data collection after that time.

Rules Governing Attendance

How Quickly Must Attendance be Reported?

Students' attendance must be recorded in a timely fashion. *Since students receive an automatic email notification of their participation as soon as the records are updated, it is imperative that researchers update the attendance records within two days of the study.* This will be closely monitored by the Coordinator.

Attendance for sessions in the final week of classes (Week 15) must be recorded no later than the following Monday so that end-of-semester reports can be compiled and made available to instructors in a timely fashion.

Can Participants Withdraw from the Study and Still Get Credit?

All participants must read and sign an "Informed Consent" form unless this has been deemed unnecessary for the study by the Institutional Review Board. Should any student decline to participate in the experiment, he or she should be gracefully excused and be marked as having participated in the study.

Any subject has the right to withdraw from an experiment at any time without penalty. He or she should be gracefully excused from the experiment and be marked as having participated in the study.

What Happens in Cases of Experimenter Error?

If students are present for a scheduled session, they are to be marked as having participated in research. This is true even if no data collection actually took place. For example, if research equipment fails and data collection is not possible, the students should be properly debriefed, graciously excused, and marked as having attended. Similarly, if the researcher has accidentally scheduled too many participants, the extra students should also be given full credit.

If a researcher fails to show within the first 5 minutes of the allotted study time, all students signed up for that session are to be given full credit for their participation. Similarly, if the researcher has accidentally scheduled too many participants, the extra students should also be given full credit.

What Happens if a Study Session Needs to be Cancelled?

In rare events, a researcher may need to cancel an entire session for personal reasons (such as researcher illness, etc.). If this cancellation occurs more than 24 hours prior to the scheduled session, the researcher shall email the participants directly, informing them of the cancellation and asking them to sign up for an another time slot (or another study). *If this cancellation occurs less than 24 hours prior to the scheduled study, the researcher shall email the participants directly and also give full credit to all participants.*

If the university closes unexpectedly closes on the day that research studies are scheduled, the Research Requirement Coordinator will decide whether the study sessions will be cancelled and will notify all researchers as soon as possible. In most cases, this decision will likely result in all scheduled participants receiving full credit (as the cancellation is most likely to be given less than 24 hours prior to the scheduled study session).

What Happens if a Participant Fails to Show?

For the student who does not show for a study, there is NO immediate penalty. The researcher shall mark this student as a "no show" in the system. The coordinator will send an email to this student reminding him or her that the appointment needs to be cancelled properly and that a second failure to show will result in action. If a student then fails to show for another study, he or she will be blocked from the system and must write the journal article summary instead in order to complete the course research requirement.

Students who fail to appear or are more than 5 minutes late for an experiment shall be considered "no shows." Researchers must mark these appropriately.

What if a Non-Registered Student Shows Up Unexpectedly?

Any student who is not on your attendance list for that particular session may not participate in the session. That student must sign up through the web site for a future session. There are no exceptions to this policy.