Roger Williams University
Instructions for Research Participation

OPTION 1: Research Participation

Research is a fundamental component of psychological science. Learning about psychology involves learning about the research process, and research participation provides a hands-on opportunity to become familiar with how research is conducted. This option gives you experience as a participant in actual psychology studies. You will also have the opportunity to learn more about yourself and your behavior in these studies. There are many different kinds of studies conducted in our department. For example, you might be asked to complete questionnaires, to view videos, to listen to music or conversations, to interact with others in a group, or to make judgments on a computer. All studies are reviewed and approved in advance by the Roger Williams University Human Subjects Review Board.

When you arrive at each study (in person or online), you will receive an explanation of that particular study and you will have a chance to ask any questions you may have about participation. If you decide to participate in the study, you will be given a written explanation of the study and asked to give your consent to participate. Even after you have consented and have started to participate, it is always up to you to decide whether to continue.

The sign-up procedure uses a web-based system called **Sona Systems** which means you will sign up for studies on-line. The procedure for signing up for experiments is detailed below. If you are still confused after reading this document check the Frequently Asked Questions (on the Sona Systems Webpage).

I. Setting up an account and password. ***Please sign up by Wednesday, September 22

The first time you use Sona Systems **each semester**, follow the steps below to set up an account (you must create a new account each semester):

Step 1: Go to: http://rwu.sona-systems.com and click on "Request Account" at the bottom right side of the screen. Then, enter the following information:
First name: enter First Name,
Last name: enter Last Name,
User ID: enter your RWU username, *(NOTE THIS IS THE USERNAME that is given to you as the prefix of your g.rwu.edu email, e.g. jsmith356).*
Email Address: please use your RWU e-mail
Re-enter Email Address: enter your e-mail again, double-checking that you have the correct address. Errors in e-mail addresses are the #1 reason students have problems with their accounts.
Select course: may choose more than one, select all your courses that have the SONA requirement

Step 2: A logon and password will be sent to your email account immediately with the link to Sona Systems in the email so that you can immediately login. If you do not receive a logon and password, please contact the SONA administrator (kbrooks@rwu.edu). NOTE: Do not use AOL email accounts. Doing so will prevent you from receiving important emails.

Step 3: To login, go to: http://rwu.sona-systems.com and type in your RWU username and the password you received. Under My profile, you can change your password as well as any other information (e.g., your phone number).

If you forget your password, go to http://rwu.sona-systems.com/ and on the left side of the screen under "your password", click on retrieve password. You will be sent your password via email.

II. Signing up and Participating in Studies

Availability. Studies will be available to participate in at various times over the semester, typically beginning 4-6 weeks into the semester and ending 2-3 weeks before the end. Once you create a SONA account, you can log in to check if new studies have been posted and sign up. To keep you updated at key times, you will occasionally receive mass e-mails from the SONA Administrator. These will come from the address "Psychology Research Participation Site <rwu-admin@sona-systems.net>" Please don't delete without reading! In order to sign up:

Step 1: Go to http://rwu.sona-systems.com and login with your username and password. To view available studies, click on the study sign-up icon. This will bring up a list of studies and you may view the schedule of available times by clicking on the specific study. You can then view the number of credits the study awards and amount of time required. To view available time slots, click on the link provided, and you will see additional information including the location of the study. Currently, many studies are conducted online and may completed from anywhere that you have internet access.

Step 2: When you find a study that meets your schedule, simply click the Sign Ups button and you will be signed up for it. If the study is *in person*, please write down the day, date, time, and location of the experiment in your calendar. If the study is being conducted *online*, you will be given the link to the study website once you sign up. Be sure to complete the online study by the deadline provided in the Sign Up. **If you sign up for a study, you will be expected to complete it.**

Step 3: You will receive a confirmation/reminder email about 24 hours before the scheduled time of the study, or before it closes, if online. To verify or change your email address, go to http://rwu.sona-systems.com and click on the "My Profile" icon at the bottom of the screen and adjust your contact information as needed.

Step 4: On the date and time of the study, go to the location of the study (if online, complete the study by the date given). If you have any questions about the location of the study, please email the person listed as the Researcher under the study description. After arriving at the experiment (in person or online), you will first be given a description of the experimental procedures and asked to sign a consent form.

Step 5: After you have completed the experiment, the researcher will assign you credit via the SONA website. *It may take up to 1 week for credit to appear on SONA.* Keep track of the credits you have earned by going to the website, logging in, and clicking on My Schedule/Credits. The experiments you have participated in, and the number of credits you have earned, as well as any outstanding appointments will be listed there. **For any problems receiving credit: first, e-mail the researcher in charge of the study; second, if not resolved, e-mail kbrooks@rwu.edu.**

Canceling A Sign-Up
If you must cancel your appointment, be sure to remove your name from the web sign-up page under My Schedule/Credits as soon as possible, so that another student may take your spot. You may cancel through SONA if it is more than 24 hours before the study appointment or deadline (go to My Schedule/Credits and click "cancel" next to the desired study). If it is less than 24 hours away, e-mail the researcher listed to cancel. **PLEASE do not contact the Psychology office, systems administrator, or instructor with information about cancellations, as these people are in no way involved in this procedure.**

- Students must earn **a specific number of research credits** that might vary semester by semester. If you are unsure how many research credits you need, ask your course instructor. Each half hour study is worth 1 credit.
- Last day to sign up for research projects **is the last class day of the semester OR the date determined by your instructor**. However, most studies wrap up before the last week of classes -- don't wait, or there likely won't be any studies running at this time.
- If there are no more studies available, you can complete research reports (described below) to complete your requirement.

OPTION 2: Writing Summaries of Research Studies Already Completed

This option is designed to give you exposure to the research that psychologists conduct by reading and reporting on already completed experiments that have been published in professional psychology journals. Students who decide on the paper option must still sign up in sona-systems and choose the paper option, under the list of available experiments. This informs your instructor that you have chosen the paper option and to expect to receive the papers from you. The typed papers and complete articles should be **turned into your instructor** by the deadline assigned by your instructor**.** They will be graded on a pass-fail basis. Students choosing Option 2 need to complete the same number of research summaries as study credits required for Option 1 (3 credits).

Note: If there are not enough studies available when you look on SONA, you may complete papers to reach the required number of credits (one credit = one 30-minute study = one research summary)

Step 1. Locating a research article: Select articles in a professional research journal that describes one or more experiments. Be sure to choose articles that are empirical (i.e., a study was conducted). Do not select theoretical articles. Only professional journals in Psychology are acceptable.

These journals are available in the University Library, or on-line via EBSCO. Your instructor can assist you in determining whether your articles are acceptable. Please note that Psychology Today, Science Magazine, Omni, Redbook, Reader's Digest, etc. are NOT professional journals.

Step 2. Format of Report: Please have your reports conform to the following guidelines:
a. Turn in a complete copy of each of the articles, including the reference list provided at the end of the article (attach a pdf of the article, if submitting electronically).
b. The written report of each article can be brief. One-to-two typed, double-spaced pages, not including the copy of the article, is acceptable.

Step 3. Coverage: Include information that responds to the following questions:
a. What was this article about (i.e., briefly summarize the purpose, methods, results, and conclusions)?
b. Why did you choose this particular journal or article?
c. How understandable or usable was the article to you? (If it seems vague or impossible to understand, feel free to say so.)
d. What did you learn as a result of your reading and how did this article relate (if at all) to class material?