

Researcher Conduct Guidelines for Human Subject Research

Scheduling Sessions

- If your study is approved, it will be activated by the system administrator. Afterwards, you can schedule data collection sessions in the SONA research website.
- The number of sessions you can schedule will be set by the administrator in accordance with your requested sample size and the duration of the study. If you are using our shared research rooms (AMD 302, 303, 304, 306), please be courteous to other researchers and do not block out excessive sessions per day for one study. During busy times (especially the second half of the semester) please limit your usage to no more than 2 or 3 hours per day.

Recruiting Participants: What you CAN do.

- With prior approval of the instructor(s), make an appearance at one or more of the daytime sessions (starting before 5pm) of PSYC 2, 4, or 8 to describe your project, announce its availability on the SONA Psychology Research Website, perhaps tell them when your sessions will be, and ask them to sign up through the website.

Recruiting Participants: What you CANNOT do:

- You are NOT permitted to pass around a signup sheet in class—signups must be managed through the SONA Research Website.
- You are NOT permitted to hand out surveys or otherwise conduct your study in the classroom during class time, if it is being carried out either for subject pool credit or extra credit for a grade in a class. Any participation-for-credit research needs to be managed through the SONA Research Website.
- Any surveys, etc. administered during class time must be done voluntarily with no research credit given, and this should be made CLEAR on the consent form. It should be clear to participants that if they do not wish to participate in the study they may either leave or simply turn in a blank questionnaire (thus, their refusal is not made public).
- You are NOT permitted to hang signs around the building advertising your study.
- You are NOT permitted to “poach” participants in the hallway looking for someone else’s study they signed up for. If you steal them away from another study they will get a no-show in the other study, and the other researcher will lose a participant.
- You are NOT permitted to wait outside of other researcher’s studies to “sell” your project or aggressively corral students into participating in your research. We consider these practices unprofessional, and in some circumstances unethical.

Researchers who engage in these practices will be reported to their class instructor or faculty advisor, or to a member of the Human Subjects Committee. Engaging in unethical practices is a violation of the [CSUS Student Conduct Code](#) and may result in failure or deactivation of the project from the website.

Conducting Your Research with Professionalism

Once your study is approved, you are generally on your own to carry it out (unless of course you have questions). We rely heavily on you to:

- Conduct yourself with a high degree of professionalism and respect for the participants and your fellow researchers, and
- Carry out your procedures exactly as stated in your approved application. If you would like to make any changes to your research procedure or materials, you need to have them approved by the Human Subjects Committee first (send a description of any changes and copies of new materials to stk28@csus.edu and await notice of your approval).

Practice Common Courtesy and Respect for Others

Researchers should observe common courtesy at all times. For example, researchers should show up to sessions on time, not stay past their allotted time, and in all other ways practice appropriate etiquette. In short, please behave professionally.

Obtain Informed Consent

Prior to each student's participation, have him/her read a copy of the Consent Form that was approved with your Human Subjects Application.

Keep Accurate Participant Attendance Logs

For subjects who are Psychology students, be sure and have them provide their Sona ID code. It is best to keep a sign-in sheet throughout the duration of the semester in order to help resolve any future credit claims that may arise.

Attend all sessions that have participants signed up in advance.

- After 6pm the evening before your session, participants will no longer be able to sign up or cancel. You are not obligated to attend a session that nobody has signed up for.
- If you have signups and you miss the session, you should assign credit to those who e-mail you the same or next day indicating that they showed up and you were not there. Contact stk28@csus.edu if any questions or issues arise.

Promptly Assign Credit to Participants

- Most of your participants will be doing research to satisfy a course requirement, or to earn extra credit. You have an important responsibility to assign their credit promptly (within a day or two, maximum). It is also important that you assign no-shows diligently so that records in the website are accurate.
- You will assign credit using the participants' Sona ID codes assigned to them in the research website. They should bring the code with them to the session and you should assign credit using that code. We do not use names in this exchange in order to help protect their privacy.
- When assigning credit, note that an "*excused*" no-show is one where the participant was too late to cancel but had a legitimate emergency, and made an honest attempt to contact you as quickly as possible to try and reschedule. An "*unexcused*" no-show is one where the student simply failed to show up without contacting you, or contacted you at some future time without a legitimate emergency to explain their absence. There is a gray area and some judgment will need to be exercised—you can contact stk28@csus.edu if you need help making a decision on this matter. If a participant receives too many unexcused absences, his or her subject pool access will be revoked.

Deactivating Your Project

- We ask that when you are finished using the SONA website for the semester, you deactivate your study. To do this:
 - Log into the Research Website
 - Click on "My Studies"
 - Select the study you want deactivate
 - Click on "Change Study Information"
 - Scroll down to the "Active Study?" field and change the radio button to "No"
 - Click on "Save Changes"