

Handbook for Psychology Undergraduate Research Experience (PURE)

Sona Administrators

Department of Psychology

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## Introduction

Welcome! In general education psychology courses (PSY 100, 221, 250, 251) you will be learning about many factors that interact to influence thinking and behavior. Just as in other scientific disciplines such as biology, chemistry, and physics, knowledge in psychology is obtained by conducting carefully designed studies or experiments. Much of what you will be learning in this class represents the findings of previous psychological research. To enhance your knowledge of research and methodology, and its relevance in the critical thinking process, we offer students the opportunity to participate in research in your general education psychology course. All 100- and 200- level general education psychology courses require a research component for which you will receive course credit. If you do not complete the research experience requirement, you will receive an incomplete in the course.

You will complete six (6) research credits for each 100- or 200-level general education psychology course in which you are enrolled. You are expected to begin completion of your research experience requirement by the second week of the semester. Students can earn one PURE credit by completing at least half (3/6) of their credits by Friday at 4:30 on the 8th week of classes. All research credits and papers will be due at 4:30pm on the 15<sup>th</sup> Monday of the semester. You have at least three options for completing this research experience requirement. You will be able to complete the research experience requirement using any combination of options allowed by your instructor.

## Earn PURE Research Credits by Becoming a Research Participant

The first option is **being a research participant** in an in-person or online study. Please read the following information carefully as it describes your rights as a research participant and instructions for participating.

Table 1. Your Rights as a Research Participant

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1. Be aware that an ethics committee has reviewed and approved each study before anyone is allowed to participate to ensure that volunteers are not mistreated.
  2. Before you participate in the study, the researcher will talk to you about the types of things that will occur during the study and you will be asked to sign a statement indicating that you have been informed of the procedures (i.e., informed consent).
  3. After you complete the study, the researcher will explain the purpose of the study you completed.
  4. You have the right to discontinue your participation in a study at any time without penalty.
  5. You have the right to expect the researcher to be professional in his or her conduct during the study. This includes the expectation that the researcher shows-up on time, conducts the study, and demonstrates appropriate respect and consideration to participants.
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## Instructions for Participating in Psychological Studies

1. You will sign up for studies using Sona Systems (<http://wiupscychology.sona-systems.com>). Your login name is your WIU email address, and you will receive an email during the first two weeks of the semester with your password. Before signing-up for a study carefully read all the information to make sure you qualify for the study.

*Note:* Be sure to record the study number, the researcher's name, the location of the study, and the date and time of the study on your personal calendar or notebook.

2. Sona Systems will assign you a unique, numeric ID code. You will see this ID code when you view the Human Subjects Policy, when you update your profile, and in email confirmations and reminders about your upcoming study sessions. Bring this ID code with you when you go to studies or when communicating with researchers, as they know you only by your ID code, and not your name.
3. Research credit is earned based upon the amount of time and type of the study (30 minutes for 1 credit for online studies and in-person studies).
4. The maximum number of credits you can earn from online studies is 3 credits (90 minutes).
5. *Cancellation Policy:* If you discover that you will be unable to attend a study for which you signed up you must cancel your participation for your scheduled study on Sona Systems at least 8 hours prior to the study. DO NOT contact your instructor or the psychology office to cancel your appointment time in a study.
6. *Arriving on Time to Appointments:* Research participation for students arriving late for their appointment is up to the discretion of the researcher. Researchers may choose to continue with the appointment or cancel the appointment. Researchers are not obligated to reschedule the appointment if a student is late. Because of the nature of some research projects, should you be late to your appointment you may not be allowed to participate and may be credited as a “no show”.
7. *No Show Policy:* After two no shows (unexcused absence – the student does not cancel the study sign-up and fails to contact the researcher in charge of the study) the student’s

Sona Systems account will become Limited. With a Limited account, the student must complete the requirement using the instructor-approved research alternatives.

*Note:* It is important for students to check the research participation website regularly, beginning early in the semester, because most research is conducted for only part of the semester. Students are strongly encouraged NOT to wait until the end of the semester as opportunities may not be available at that time.

### **Research Alternatives**

Aside from participating in studies, you also have other research options to earn PURE credits by completing the Written Report for Research Experience. This form is available at WG111 (Psychology Resource Center). You must complete the Written Report for Research Credit and submit it to WG111 to obtain credit for these options. Table 2 on the next page lists all research options for earning PURE credits.

In-person studies are the ones for which you go to a study location (often in Waggoner Hall) at a timeslot you signed up for participation. On-line studies do not require your physical presence. You can participate in on-line studies from any convenient location with an Internet connection (e.g., your room in a residence hall).

Table 2. List of Research Options

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1. Participate in an on-line study, including but not limited to an on-line experiment or survey.	30 minutes – 1 credit
2. Participate in an in-person study, including but not limited to an in-person experiment or survey.	30 minutes – 1 credit
3. Read and complete a report on a research article (available in Waggoner 111).	1 report – 1 credit
4. Read and complete a report on a research-related newspaper article (if available from instructor).	1 report – 1 credit
5. Watch a video-taped study (if available from instructor) and complete a report.	30 minutes – 1 credit
6. Participate in a simulated in-person or on-line study (if available from instructor) where no data are collected.	30 minutes – 1 credit
7. Interview a psychology researcher or faculty member doing research and write a report.	1 report – 1 credit

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### **What should I do if I have a problem or complaint?**

1. If the issue is about course credit for your research participation, see your instructor.
2. If you have a complaint or concern about a study, contact the faculty member listed on Sona Systems for the study.
3. If your issue is not resolved to your satisfaction, contact Dr. Sears, interim chair of the Psychology Department, at 298-1593, or Dr. McGuire, Psychology Department Research Committee Chair at [PsychologyResearch@wiu.edu](mailto:PsychologyResearch@wiu.edu) .

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

Q: What is the psychology undergraduate research experiment (PURE) requirement?

A: Details on the PURE requirement are available at the following link –

<http://www.wiu.edu/cas/psychology/research/PURE.php>

Q: Why does the psychology department have a research requirement?

A: Research is an important aspect of both the undergraduate and graduate majors in Psychology at WIU. Just as in other scientific disciplines such as biology, chemistry, and physics, knowledge in psychology is obtained by conducting carefully designed studies or experiments. Much of what you will be learning in this class represents the findings of previous psychological research. To enhance your knowledge of research and methodology, and its relevance in the critical thinking process, we offer students the opportunity to participate in research in your general education psychology course. The PURE requirement allows for researchers to conduct research while allowing for participants to learn about the

research process. Without the PURE requirement researchers would be unable to complete the research that allows students to graduate successfully and the psychology department at WIU to remain competitive with other, larger research institutions.

Q: What is my login ID and password?

A: Your login will be your Western Illinois University email address. If you have forgotten your password you can click the “lost your password” link in the BOTTOM-LEFT corner of the screen and enter your email in order to have it sent to you. If this doesn’t work you may contact an administrator at [PsychologyResearch@wiu.edu](mailto:PsychologyResearch@wiu.edu) and they will email it to you manually.

Q: What can I do if I don’t want to participate in research?

A: There are a variety of research alternatives available (detailed in the PURE information page). It is important to refer to the SYLLABUS for your specific class since professors may dictate specific terms or materials for the completion of research alternatives. The PURE requirement must be completed for all students in non- online PSY 100, 221, 250 and 251 but how you complete the required credits is up to you!

Q: I have questions that are hard to explain through an email...what can I do?!

A: A Sona administrator will be holding office hours in WG 111 (Psychology Resource Center). These hours will be posted on the door of WG 111.

Q: If I am in two classes with a PURE requirement (100/200 level psych classes) do I need to complete 6 credits for each class?

A: Yes you do. When signing up for studies you will be able to decide which class you want your credits to go toward.

Q: What can I do if I signed up for a study and then found out I can't make it?

A: If you know you can't make it and it is more than 24 hours prior to your participation you may go into SONA and cancel your sign-up. If it is within 24 hours of your participation you should go to the study information screen and email the researcher in order to let them know.

Q: What if I totally forget to show up for a study I signed up for?

A: Once you no-show twice your account will become restricted to only research alternatives. At this point you will have to rely on only the research alternatives in order to complete your PURE requirements. Please try as hard as you can to show up for studies that you sign up for!

Q: Why can't I sign up for online studies?

A: If you are unable to sign up for online studies it is probably due to the fact that there is a cap on the number of credits you can earn through online studies. Once you have earned half (50%) of your credits through online studies you will no longer be able to sign up for online studies. You may still sign up for in person research studies or research alternatives.

Q: It shows that I need to complete 26+ credits! Is this correct?!

A: For each 100 or 200 level psychology class you are enrolled in you will be required to complete 6 credits. Extra credits are made available for students in upper division psychology courses (300/400 level) in order to allow them to earn extra credit offered by their instructors (check your syllabus, depends on instructor). Only the credits for the 100/200 level classes are required.

Q: Where can I find written reports for research credit?

A: The written reports for research credit are available in WG 111.

Q: I participated in a study and/or turned in a written report for research credit and have not received credit yet.

A: It sometimes takes researchers a few days to award credit for participation. If it has been a week and you still haven't received credit for your participation feel free to email the researchers to remind them or email an administrator at [PsychologyResearch@wiu.edu](mailto:PsychologyResearch@wiu.edu).

Q: I went to Waggoner 111 for something SONA/PURE related (turn in a written report, acquire a written report, read articles) and it was closed! What can I do?

A: Waggoner 111 is only guaranteed to be open when it is staffed. Hours will be posted on the door of WG 111. Please return during the posted office hours.

Q: Immediately after I login to the Sona systems website, as soon as I click on any menu option, I am taken back to the login page and I see a message that my authentication has expired.

What does this mean?

A: Your web browser is not properly configured to accept cookies. You should turn on cookies in your web browser, use a different web browser (for example, try Firefox if you are currently using Internet Explorer), or try a different computer. Detailed instructions can be found if you go to the site and enter the URL “cookie\_help.asp” in place of “default.asp” in the address bar of the browser, when you are on the front page of the site. Another easy thing to try is simply to use another computer. Usually the computers in university computer labs are configured correctly.

Q: I participated in a study, but I have yet to receive credit. How do I receive credit?

A: The researcher must grant you credit. This is usually done shortly after your participation. If it has been some time and you have still not received credit, contact the researcher.

Q: Who can see the information about my sign-ups? I don't want everyone to know which studies I signed up for.

A: Only the researcher of the study may see that you have signed up for it, along with the subject pool administrator. No other users, including other researchers or your instructor, may see this information.

Q: How do I change the email address where email notifications from the system are sent?

A: Provide an Alternate Email address and notifications will be sent there. See the Email Address Options section of this documentation for more information.

Q: I wrote a paper instead of participating in studies. How do I know I have completed my requirements?

A: View the My Schedule and Credits page and any non-study credit will also be listed there. See the Tracking Your Progress section of this documentation for more information.