Handbook for Psychology Undergraduate Research Experience (PURE)

Revised Spring 25

Sona Administrators

Department of Psychology

Western Illinois University

Introduction

Welcome! In general education psychology courses (PSY 100, 221, & 250) 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 this semester, you will receive an incomplete in the course (i.e., a grade of [I] in place of your earned grade) until the research requirement is successfully completed.

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 third week of the semester. To encourage successful completion of this requirement early in the semester, a "bonus" PURE credit can be earned if you successfully complete at least half of the total required credits by Friday at 4:30 on the 8th week of classes. All research credits will be due at 4:30pm on the 16th Friday 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.

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

1. Be assured 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.
4. You have the right to stop participating in a study at any time without penalty.
5. You have the right to expect the researcher to be professional in their 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.

Research Alternatives

Aside from participating in studies, you also have other research options to earn PURE credits. Alternatives can be found in the Western Online PURE course. One alternative option is completing an Empirical Research Assessment (ERA). ERA's will require you to read an empirical article and demonstrate your understanding of the article through an assessment. You must pass the assessment with at least 70% correct answers to obtain credit. Follow the instructions below to self-register for the PURE course in Western Online.

1. Go to the Western Online main page: https://westernonline.wiu.edu/d2l/home
2. Click on "Tools" and select "Self-Registration" from the drop menu
3. Select PURE

Table 2 lists all research options for earning PURE credits.

Table 2. List of Research Options

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. Complete an Empirical Research Assessment (available by self-registering for the PURE course in Western Online).	1 assessment = 1 credit
4. Participate in a simulated in-person or on-line study where no data are collected.	30 minutes = 1 credit
5. Participate in a simulated in-person or on-line assessment where no data are collected.	30 minutes = 1 credit

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

1. If the issue is about course credit related to PURE, see your instructor.

2. If you have a complaint or concern about a study, contact the faculty member listed in the study description on Sona Systems:

   https://wiupsychology.sona-systems.com/Default.aspx?ReturnUrl=%2f

3. If your issue is not resolved to your satisfaction, contact Dr. Lane, Chair of the Psychology Department, at 309-298-1593, or Dr. McGuire, Psychology Department Research Committee Chair at PsychologyResearch@wiu.edu .

Psychology Undergraduate Research Exposure (PURE) & SONA (For Students)

Q and A:

What is PURE?
Psychology Undergraduate Research Experience (PURE) is a mandatory requirement for all students enrolled in General Education Psychology classes. Psychology is a science and research is crucial to understanding any topic in science. The PURE requirement is designed to provide students with hands-on learning about research. Students are required to accumulate at least **6 credits** of research experience for each general education psychology course in which they are enrolled. More information is available about PURE on the web site: http://www.wiu.edu/cas/psychology/research/PURE.php

How much time does it take to earn a PURE credit?
One PURE credit is awarded for every estimated half hour of time a task is taken to complete.

What happens at the beginning of the semester?
On the 10th day of every semester, after the add/drop date, class lists for all Gen Ed courses are downloaded and placed in the SONA system. SONA is the main software that keeps track of PURE credits earned by students and also the online portal to sign up for studies. Once class lists are downloaded into SONA, each student will automatically receive an email to their WIU e-mail account with their account login information (this happens on the third Monday or Tuesday of the semester) and students can begin completing their credits.

What do I do once I receive an email from SONA?
You will sign up for studies using Sona Systems (http://wiupsychology.sona-systems.com). Your login name is your WIU email address, and your password is in the email from SONA. 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.

I did not get an email from SONA:
If it is the third week of the semester and you have not received an email with account information, you may need to check your SPAM folder because emails come from SONA rather than WIU. If you still have not received an email, you should contact psychologyresearch@wiu.edu .

What is a SONA ID?
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.

Who has access to information about my sign-ups for studies in SONA?
Only the SONA administrator. No other users, including other researchers or your instructor, may see this information. Your identified by the SONA ID number and only the SONA administrator can link this ID to your name.

When do I get credit after participating in a study?
The researcher must grant you credit. This is usually done shortly after your participation. If it has been more than a few days and you have still not received credit, contact the researcher.

How do I cancel an appointment after I have already signed up for a study in SONA?
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 24 hours prior to the study. DO NOT contact your instructor or the psychology office to cancel your appointment time in a study as only the researchers will have access to your SONA ID number and can cancel your session.

What if I am late for study I have signed up for in SONA?
Research participation for students arriving late for their appointment is at 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".

What if I forgot to cancel a study I have signed up for in SONA?
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 research alternatives.

There are no studies to sign up for in SONA:
Available in person and online studies in SONA vary throughout the semester. In addition, certain studies may only be available to some students. Students that would like to participate in research should wait for additional studies to post or they can complete their credits through non-research alternatives. 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.

What if I do not want to participate in research?
Students are able to complete credits through non-research alternatives. These alternatives can be found in the PURE course in Western Online (WO). The following instructions can be used to access the course:
1. Go to the Western Online main page: https://westernonline.wiu.edu/d2l/home
2. Click on "Tools" and select "Self-Registration" from the drop menu
3. Select PURE

What are non-research alternatives?
Non-research alternatives are activities provided to students so that they can earn PURE credits in ways other than research participation. These alternatives are intended to provide students with exposure to other aspects of the research process. One alternative is to complete Empirical Research Assessments (ERA's) and complete a 10-item multiple choice quiz. One PURE credit is awarded for receiving a 70% on one of these quizzes. Other alternatives include completing online trainings/tutorials and students upload their certificate of completion in WesternOnline (ranging from 1 to 3 PURE credits).

Will credits completed in the WesternOnline PURE course show up in SONA?
Credits completed in the WesternOnline PURE course take 1 week or less to show up in SONA. If you do not see credits showing after 1 week, contact the SONA administrator: psychologyresearch@wiu.edu.

What are early completion credits and when are they granted?
One PURE credit is awarded to every student who completes at least half of their total credits by 4:30pm on the 8th Friday of the semester.

What is the deadline to complete credits?
The final deadline for PURE completion is Friday at 4:30pm on the last day of the semester. This deadline is necessary in order to tally all student credits and to provide instructors a completion report before grades are due to registrar.

What if I do not complete credits by the semester deadline?
Students who do not complete their credits must be given an Incomplete for their final grade and they will need to receive a grade change the following semester. Students have until 4:30pm on Friday of the 8th week of the following semester to complete their credits. If they are not completed by this time, the registrar automatically changes all "I" grades to an "F". Students will receive at least two reminders from SONA regarding this deadline. One reminder is sent at the beginning of the semester, and another is sent a week before the deadline.

How will my instructor know when I need a grade change if I complete after the current semester?
On Friday at 4:30pm on the 8th week of the semester, all incomplete students who have completed credits are documented. A SONA administrator will then provide your instructor a list of all students needing a grade change by Monday of the 9th week. If you complete during this time, your instructor will be automatically notified.

What if I did not complete my incomplete credits by the 8th week of the following semester?
SONA only tracks student completion during the current semester and for the first 8 weeks of the following semester. If your incomplete grade turns into an "F" OR if you are beyond the 8th week of the following semester, you can still complete your credits through the same methods listed previously. However, YOU MUST NOTIFY YOUR INSTRUCTOR once you complete your credits in order to receive a grade change.

When can I complete my credits after the deadline has passed?
While the SONA system remains open, students participating in studies will not have credits assigned for the current semester after the deadline has passed. However, these credits will be archived and will apply to the completion of their course the following semester. The Western Online PURE course is shut down after the final deadline and does not reopen until the following semester. The Western Online PURE course is not open during the summer semester.

Do PURE requirements differ for online courses versus in person courses?
The only difference students completing in person courses experience is a requirement to complete half of their PURE credits through in person studies (versus online studies). Online students may not reside on campus and are not subject to the requirement that half of the studies be completed in person.

Are there other PURE resources I can access?
Yes. Resources include 1) SONA admin contact information: psychologyresearch@wiu.edu, 2) The PURE handbook (http://www.wiu.edu/cas/psychology/research/purehandbook.pdf), and 3) WIU PURE/SONA video tutorial (https://youtu.be/VxVcAI5wnkA)