Frequently Asked Questions for Conducting Research Using the Psychology <u>Course Credit</u> Subject Pool

*1) Who can use the Psychology **Course Credit** Subject Pool?*

Faculty, post-docs, graduate students and honors undergraduates in the Psychology Department are eligible to use the Psychology Department's **Course Credit** Subject Pool.

2) What is the difference between the IRB and the HSC?

The IRB is the Institutional Review Board. It is run by the University and all research must initially be approved by the IRB. Forms for IRB review are available at their website. IRB review may take several weeks, so be sure to plan ahead. The HSC is the Human Subjects Committee. It is run by the department of Psychology. After your research is approved by the IRB, it must go through a second review by a member of the HSC. See the HSC review guidelines for more information.

3) What is a "subject hour"?

The easiest way to think about subject hours is as credits. 1 subject pool credit granted = 1 subject hour used.

Depending on the length of your study and the number of sessions in your study, your study may cost more than one subject hour to run a single participant. Because we factor in the commute time for participants, below is the translation between subject hour and length of study:

½ subject hour = 25 mins	2 subject hours = 110 mins
1 subject hour = 50 mins	2.5 subject hours = 140 mins
1.5 subject hours = 80 mins	3 subject hours = 170 mins

4) How do I get subject hours?

To request an allocation of hours, you must complete the subject hour allocation request form before the beginning of each semester (link available on the department website).

5) Once I have a subject hour allocation, how do I use them in subject pool?

Once you have your subject hours allocation (the Subject Pool Coordinator will e-mail you with the hours you have been allocated), you have to set up a study in the **Course Credit** Subject Pool. To do this, fill out the study activation request form (link available on the department website).

6) How do participants sign up for my study?

Participants sign up on-line at the **Psychology Course Credit Subject Pool** website (http://uiuc.sona-systems.com/). Both the **Course Credit** and Paid Subject Pool studies use the online Sona system, but the systems are kept completely separate and there are separate links and instructions for the two different subject pools.

7) What is the Free-For-All Period?

The Free-For-All is the last 5-6 weeks of the semester (see Subject Pool Calendar for specific dates). During this time, you may run as many subjects as you wish. You are no longer limited to the

number of hours you were allocated. This procedure is intended to motivate you to run your allocated subject hours earlier in the semester, while at the same time providing more options to subjects as the semester winds down.

There is no free-for-all period for Summer I semester, because it is too short.

8) How do I get hours for the Free-For-All Period? Do I need to ask for my study to be included?

If your study is active and visible in the **Course Credit** Subject Pool system, Free-For-All hours will automatically be added to your study. You do not need to send a special request to get them. If you run out of Free-For-All hours, send an email to the Subject Pool Coordinator to get more hours added to your study.

9) What is the pretest/prescreen? How do I use it?

The pretest (or prescreen) is a series of questions that all participants are required to answer when they set up their **Course Credit** Subject Pool account. It must be done separately for the **Course Credit** and Paid subject pools. It includes a variety of basic informational questions that researchers can use to screen out certain populations, or to recruit a very specific population of participants. To set up requirements using the pretest, from your study's main page, click on *View/Modify Restrictions* in the center of the screen. An age restriction has automatically been included in your study's prescreen restrictions. This is so that under age participants do not participate. Do not remove this restriction. Select any other questions you want to use for prescreening. Click *Set Restrictions*. Select the response options that you want to be eligible for participation in your study. Click *Save Changes*.

Researchers have the opportunity to request changes to the prescreen questionnaire before the beginning of each semester. An e-mail will be sent out by the subject pool coordinator at the end of the previous semester notifying researchers of the opportunity, and any changes to the prescreen questionnaire (which must be approved by the HSC) will be implemented during the following semester.

10) What is the sign-up/cancellation deadline for participants to sign up for a study?

For both the **Course Credit** and Paid Subject Pool, participants can sign up for a study or cancel an appointment online as long as it is before the set deadline. Researchers can set their own deadlines and they will appear on the information page of each study. We recommend that you do not set a deadline or more than 24 hours or less than 1 hour.

*11) I need to add more subject hours to my **Course Credit** Subject Pool study. How do I do that?*

If you want to add more subject hours to a study that has already been activated, send an email to the Subject Pool Coordinator that includes the number of hours you want added, whose hours will be used, and what study number you want the hours added to. No additional forms need to be filled out to accomplish this.

*12) I want an additional (or new) study number for a project that already exists in the **Course Credit** Subject Pool system. What do I need to do?*

To request a new study, fill out the **Course Credit Subject Pool Study Activation Request** form (Link available on the department website) and attach the most recent IRB approval letter. Shortly after it is received, a new study will be created in the system, subject hours will be added, and you will be able to run your study. You will receive an email when your request has been processed. If you're requesting a study number in the **Course Credit** system for a study that already exists in the Paid system, you need to turn in a separate **Course Credit** Subject Pool Study Request form and include the study number of the

study of the corresponding Paid system on the form. If the study has never been approved by the HSC for the **Course Credit** Subject Pool, see the study request form to find out what material must be included with the form (See the "Instructions for Researchers Using the Psychology Course Credit Subject Pool" for more information.)

13) I requested Masters or PhD hours this semester, but I am not going to use all of them before the end of the semester. Can I return them so that I can use them during another semester?

The unused priority hours that were never posted can still be returned, but with a penalty:

- Priority hours returned before the subject pool opens will not incur any penalty.
- Unused priority hours returned within 3 weeks after the subject pool opens will incur a 25% penalty.
- Unused priority hours returned within 6 weeks after the subject pool opens will incur a 50% penalty.
- Any priority hours that have not been used before the beginning of the free-for-all period will be automatically returned with a 75% penalty.

Email the Subject Pool Coordinator with the number of subject hours to return, what study to take them from (if they have already been allocated to a **Course Credit** Subject Pool study), the type of priority hours they are, and whose account they will be returned to. After the Free-For-All period begins, you cannot return priority hours even if you have not used them.

The priority hours that were posted but never got filled can be returned without penalty. Let the subject coordinator know in your email.

*14) My research was exempted by the IRB. What do I need to do to use the **Course Credit** Subject Pool?*

If your research was exempted by the IRB, you will not be required to provide a consent form. However, you are still obliged to inform subjects you recruit from the Psychology Course Credit Subject Pool of certain things, specifically:
- how much credit they will earn.
- how much time the procedure will take.
- how a failure to complete will earn less or no credit (depending on whether the study is more or less than 1 hour).
- how a failure to complete will not affect the student's relationship with the University.

You can inform them via a document or by a verbal protocol, either of which should be part of your application to use the Psychology Course Credit Subject Pool. If you feel that your research merits an exception to this rule, you can include in your application a description of why you believe this to be the case. Your proposal will be reviewed by the entire committee, and you may consequently have to wait longer for a response.

15) How do I post sessions for my study?

To create timeslots for your study, from your study's main page, click *View/Administer Timeslots* and then click *Add a Timeslot*. Fill out the timeslot information: the date, time with AM/PM, number of participants in the session, and the location. Include both the building (Psychology or Beckman Institute), and room number. Click *Add this timeslot*. This automatically deducts from the hours allocated to the study. Repeat this process for every session.

*16) I need to give another researcher access to my **Course Credit** Subject Pool study. How do I do that?*

From your study's main page, click *Change Study Information*, near the bottom of the screen. This allows you to modify settings including researcher access. In the center of the screen, you will see a *Researchers* box. While holding down the control key on the keyboard, select the additional researcher names that you want to have access to your study. Click *Save Changes* when you are finished. If the researchers name is not there, then they do not currently have a researcher account set up in the **Course Credit** Subject Pool system. Email the Subject Pool Coordinator and ask for a researcher account to be created for this person for the **Course Credit** system. Then follow the steps above to allow them to access your study.

17) I tried to log in and my account says it's been disabled. What's wrong?

The **Course Credit** and Paid Subject Pool systems do not use the passwords that you use for other university services, but instead use passwords that are specific to them. If you already have an account in the **Course Credit** system but cannot remember your password, click *Lost Password*. You will be able to retrieve your password by following the steps outlined there. If you still can't access your account, it may be that your account hasn't been re-activated for the semester yet. Email the Subject Pool Coordinator to request re-activation of your account.

Please note that during the time that the Course Credit Subject Pool is closed, all researcher accounts in this Pool will be deactivated.

18) I am a researcher but don't have a researcher account in the Psychology Course Credit Subject Pool system. How do I get one?

Email the Subject Pool Coordinator and a researcher account will be created for you. Typically, this is done automatically when a study is created in the system, so you shouldn't need to request it separately.

19) I want to run a second short study during my session that is under a different IRB. What do I need to do?

If you want to add another short study during a session that is already in the **Course Credit** system and the second study is under a different IRB protocol, then it needs to be on file with the Subject Pool Coordinator and it must have been approved already by the HSC. Fill out the **Course Credit Subject Pool Study Request** form, indicating that you will be using multiple IRBs under one study number. If the new IRB protocol has already been approved by the HSC, this will be processed quickly. If not, then it will be sent out for an HSC review before it can be added to the existing study.

20) The Subject Pool Calendar says that it ends on reading day. Can I still run studies on Reading day?

Yes. You can run subject pool studies until the end of the day on Reading Day. However, you must make sure that you record credit promptly, since the credits are sent to instructors the following day.

21) There are multiple email addresses for the Subject Pool. Which one do I use?

psych-subjects@illinois.edu

22) What do I do with the sign-in sheets after participants have signed them?

It is recommended that researchers print out the SONA attendance sheet for each study for their own record. (These can be printed out from the **Course Credit** Subject Pool online system.) It will show the date and time, the participant's name, and the study number. Researchers can require participants to

sign this sheet at the beginning of the session. If so, researchers will keep the sign-in sheets for their own record (while following all IRB protocol regarding privacy), and there is <u>no need</u> to turn in the sheet to the subject pool coordinator.

23) A participant forgot to sign in during a session. Is this a problem?

Sign-in sheets ensure that the participant is at the correct study on the correct date and time. It also provides confirmation that a participant did in fact show up for their study and should receive credit, if there is ever a discrepancy. If a participant fails to sign in, you should write next to the participant's name that they were there but forgot to sign the attendance sheet, and make sure to have all participants sign in for future sessions.

24) I need to email the participants who have signed up for my study. How can I do that?

There are two ways to do this. (1) From your study's home page, click *Contact Participants*. Select the type of participant you wish to contact, enter the message you wish to send them, and click *Send Message*. (2) From your study's home page, click *View/Administer Timeslot*. Select the session, and click *Modify*. At the bottom of the screen (below the *Update Sign-Ups* button), click *Contact All Participants*. This allows you to email all participants who are currently signed up for that particular time slot. Enter the message you wish to send them, and click *Send Message*.

25) I want to exclude students in certain courses from signing up for my study. How can I do that?

From your study's main page, click *Change Study Information*, near the bottom of the screen. This allows you to modify settings including class restrictions. Scroll down until you see the *Advanced Settings* section. Look for *the Course Restrictions* box. While holding down the control key on the keyboard, select all the courses that you want to <u>include</u> in your study. That is, the courses that you want to exclude from participating in your study should <u>not</u> be selected. Click *Save Changes* when you are finished.

26.a) I need to recruit a very specific sub-population from the subject pool. Can I email all eligible participants directly?

Researchers are able to directly email less than 250 participants who qualify for their particular study at a time. Go to "Prescreen results" → "Prescreen qualification analysis" → specify the prescreening questions that narrows down your target population → "View question response data" → "Analyze" → directly enter your email message on the page.
Note that all email communication will be logged and can be monitored by the administrator. <u>Please don't send out email more than once per month. Also, please don't send out email if your study is not recruiting a particular sub-population from the pool.</u>

26.b) My study is a multi-part study, making it hard to attract participants. Can I email eligible participants to boost sign-ups?

Yes. In this case, you can use the email feature mentioned above, even if your study isn't targeting a specific sub-population.

In conclusion, only multi-part studies and studies that are targeting a specific sub-population can use the recruiting email feature.

27) I need to recruit two different sub-populations separately for the same study. How can I do that?

If you want to recruit two different sub-populations simultaneously for the same study, you can ask for an additional **Course Credit** study number to be created (see Instructions for Researchers Using the Psychology **Course Credit** Subject Pool). Set each study to have one of the restrictions, which will allow you to separately recruit both sub-populations at the same time.

28) What is the difference between an Excused and Unexcused No-Show?

A No-Show includes any situation in which the participant does not complete a study session and does not receive credit. A No-Show is not necessarily a penalty because it does not remove credit earned - it just does not add a credit to your account. There are two kinds of No-Shows: Excused and Unexcused.

An Excused No-Show is granted when a participant does not show up and has a valid documented excuse (e.g., Doctor's note, letter from the Emergency Dean). Excused No-Shows are also granted whenever a Researcher cancels a time slot with more than 24 hours notice, or if a participant chooses to withdraw from a study.

An Unexcused No-Show is granted when a participant does not show up and has no valid documented excuse (e.g., forgetting about a time slot, arriving late, failing to complete an on-line study by the deadline).

29) A participant showed up late to my study. Am I required to run them in my study?

If a participant is late, you are not required to allow them to participate. If there is enough time remaining, or both you and the participant are willing to stay after the originally scheduled end time, you may choose to run the participant. However, participants are told that they will not be allowed to participate if they show up late, so you are under no obligation to run them. If you choose not to allow them to participate, mark them as an *Unexcused No-Show*, and write in the *Comments* box that they showed up late for their scheduled appointment.

30) A participant is being disruptive, on their cell phone, or purposely giving inappropriate answers. Is there anything I can do?

Researchers should remind participants to turn off and put away all cell phones, iPods, or anything else that may be distracting. If these devices are used during the study, the researcher may ask the participant to leave. If participants are being disruptive, purposely providing inaccurate or inappropriate responses, or acting in a manner which makes the researcher believe that the data will be unusable, a researcher can ask the participant to leave and they will not receive any credit for the session. When updating attendance in the online subject pool system, the researcher should mark the student as an *Unexcused No-Show* and describe the conduct of the participant in the *Comments* box.

31) A participant wants to withdraw from my study. What procedures do I need to follow?

Students who are uncomfortable with a study can withdraw at any time. If it is a study shorter than 1-hour, they will not receive any credit for the session, and should receive an excused no-show. If the study is longer than 1 hour or is multi-session, participants can receive pro-rated credit for partial completion. To receive the pro-rated credit, you must provide a Voluntary Withdrawal Form (available on the department website), which the student must fill out and return to the Subject Pool Coordinator to receive partial credit.

32) I accidentally ran a participant who did not sign up for my study? What do I do?

By accident, a researcher may run a participant who has not signed up for their study (i.e., the researcher goes to award credit to the participant and realizes that their name is not on their credit page). If this happens, the researcher must email the Subject Pool Coordinator explaining the situation and providing the following: student's name, email address, study #, session date/time, and amount of credit that they should have received. The Coordinator will review the information and assign credit as necessary.

33) A participant showed up for my study, but they do not meet the pre-requisites. What do I do?

Participants are asked to only sign up for studies whose pre-requisites they meet. If they do not meet the pre-requisites that are posted with your study or those that you have selected using the pretest, then you may choose not to run them. Mark the participant as an *Excused No-Show* and write in the *Comments* box that the participant did not meet the pre-requisites for the study. They will not receive any credit for the session.

34) I need to cancel a session for my study, what do I do?

When you cancel a session, you must email the participants and the Subject Pool Coordinator. Include a list of the participants' names in the email to the Coordinator.

If there is more than 24 hours before the study, select the session you want to cancel and click *Modify*, which brings up the credits page. Change each participant's status from *No Action Taken* to *Excused No-Show*. In the *Comments* box write *Researcher Cancelled*. This lets us know that this was a cancellation and it will be considered an excused *No-Show*. Make sure there are no additional slots available during the time you wish to cancel, otherwise more participants could sign up.

If it is less than 24 hours before the study, select the session you want to cancel and click *Modify*, which brings up the credits page. Change each participant's status from *No Action Taken* to *Participated*. In the *Comments* box write *Researcher Cancelled*. This lets us know that this was a cancellation and the participant will receive credit.

35) A participant emailed me to cancel their appointment. What do I do?

If a participant needs to cancel, and it is before the cancelation deadline, tell them they need to cancel online under *My Schedule/Credits*. If it the cancelation deadline has passed, then it is too late to cancel online. On the credits page, mark them as an *Unexcused No Show* and in the *Comments* box write *Participant emailed too late to cancel.* This will not excuse their *No-Show*, but it provides information about the *No-Show*, in case they appeal to have it excused.

36) A participant missed their appointment and emailed me explaining their absence. What do I do?

If a participant misses a study, they must be marked as an *Unexcused No-Show*. Information about the absence must be included in the *Comments* box. This can include whether they emailed to explain the absence, the justification for missing the study, etc. This information will be reviewed and in certain cases (emergency, documented illness, etc), the *No-Show* may be Excused. Typically, if they cancel after the cancelation deadline of your study or miss an appointment, it will be considered an *Unexcused No-Show*. After two unexcused *No-Shows*, the student will be locked out of the system and won't be able to sign up for any more studies.

37) A participant missed their appointment, and asked if they can reschedule or do a make-up appointment so that they won't be marked as an Unexcused No-Show. Can I do that?

No. Researchers can't offer make-up appointments or reschedule their appointments within the **Course Credit** Subject Pool system. You must mark them as an *Unexcused No-Show*. However, participants can still sign up for your study again online in the **Course Credit** Subject Pool.

38) I want to give participants money and credit depending on their performance in the study. Can I do that?

No. Payment <u>cannot</u> be offered for participating in studies in the Course Credit Subject Pool. Participants cannot receive additional payment for a study they are doing for course credit, nor should they be enticed to stay late with the offer of payment. At the completion of the study (but <u>not</u> before), the researcher can ask a participant if they would like to provide their contact information in order to become part of a database of people willing to be contacted about future participation in paid studies. Participating in **Course Credit** Subject Pool studies is meant to be part of the student's educational experience.

39) I want participants to complete follow-up questionnaires or provide third-party data. Can I do that?

When a participant will be asked for third party data, they should know before signing up for the study. This information should be posted as a requirement for the study. To ensure that no coercion is involved, the consent form must emphasize that recruiting third-party data is entirely voluntary, and in no way alters course credit received for the study. There must be no additional compensation offered for recruiting a third-party participant (e.g., no extra credit, no monetary payment). The time involved to recruit a third party should not make the total amount of time spent participating in the study exceed what they have been told will be required. If a third party participates in research, the usual IRB guidelines regarding their informed consent apply. The debriefing procedure should make clear why third party data are important to the research.