Researcher's Guide to the
Psychology Department Subject Pool

The Psychology Department maintains a subject pool for the benefit of students and faculty who wish to gather data from human beings. Toward this end, many of the courses that the Department offers include a component of research experience. Students in Psychology 1 are required to earn four points of research credit; students in Psychology 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, and 101 are required to earn three points of research credit for each of these courses in which they are enrolled. Students in other psychology courses may earn points at the discretion of their instructor. In the latter case, the points may be required or treated as extra credit.

Students may earn research points in two ways: 1) They may write reports on research articles. For every acceptable (guidelines for reports are provided in the student instruction guide) report submitted at the end of the semester, the student receives one point of research credit. 2) They may participate in psychological research. Credit for participation in research accumulates in half point increments. For every half hour of participation, a student receives half a point of research credit. If a student participates for less than half an hour, the student earns half a point of credit. If a study requires attendance at multiple sessions, credit is assigned based on the total amount of time that is spent participating in the study. For example, if a study required attendance at two half-hour sessions and one forty-five minute session, a student would earn two points of credit for participating.

What do I need to do to tap the subject pool? If you wish to use students from psychology classes in your research, you must submit a request to the Subject Pool Coordinator (Stephen Dopkins) by the end of the first week of classes for the semester. The necessary forms are available in the departmental lobby on the first floor. At the same time, or prior to this, you should apply to have your project approved by the university's IRB. You must have the IRB’s approval in hand before you may begin running subjects. During the second week of classes, you will be informed as to your subject allocation for the coming semester.

How do I recruit subjects? You recruit subjects using the department’s web-based Psychology Research Signup System. The URL for this system is http://research.psychology.gwu.edu. The operation of this system is explained in the document, Psychology Research Website Documentation (Researcher), which should accompany the present document. Please remember that you must advertise your study as earning the appropriate number of research points, under the assignment scheme outlined above, and that you must advertise your study as taking the amount of time corresponding to the number of points that it earns. Even if your study takes less than the full amount of time corresponding to the number of points that it earns, you must not acknowledge this in your advertisement of the study. For example, if your study takes 35 minutes, you must grant 1 point of credit to each participant completing the study, and you must advertise the study as taking 1 hour (not 35 minutes) to complete. Researchers who fail to

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abide by these rules will be assigned a low priority during the next subject allocation term.

Running subjects. You may award only as many research points as you have been allocated. If you exceed your allocation, you will be assigned a low priority during the next subject allocation term. Please remember that students have the right to withdraw from your study at any time if they wish and to be debriefed concerning the purpose of the study. If a student withdraws, he/she receives credit for participating. Finally, please remember that you must give each student a receipt indicating that she/he participated in your study. Please do not give students blank receipts, and please complete the receipts in ink. The receipts will be used in resolving discrepancies at the end of the semester. A copy of the receipt form is attached.

Awarding credit. After each session of your experiment, use the Experiment Management System to award credit to the students who showed up. Please assign only as many points as each student has earned, using the assignment scheme outline above. The system gives you the option of administering a penalty to students who failed to show up. The departmental policy is to administer this penalty unless your research is "[N]on-exempt human subjects research conducted or supported by HHS or non-federally supported research to which an OHRP-approved Federalwide Assurance (FWA) applies." The system will penalize students 1 point for missing a study regardless of the number of points that the study is worth.

Experimenter failure. Should it be the case that an experiment is posted but not conducted (i.e., the researcher fails to show up) it is the responsibility of the researcher to award credit to the students involved. One compensatory point should be administered to each student regardless of the number of points the study is worth. E-mails from involved students will be forwarded directly to the relevant researchers. The matter should be resolved between the researchers and the students.

IMPORTANT DATE

December 6, 2010    Last day to run subjects