

Researcher Protocol

Participant Pool Coordinator for 2011-2012: Prof. Jeremy Loebach (loebach@stolaf.edu)
Google Document with experiment sign-up information: Research Participation Sign Up Sheet
Moodle site for tracking credits: Psych 125 Participant Pool

1. Make sure you have first gained IRB approval before starting *any* study (unless exempted under current regulations).
 - A. More information on how to do is on the St. Olaf College website:
<http://www.stolaf.edu/academics/irb/>
 - B. Read the background/instructions
 - i. Fill out and submit the appropriate forms (faculty members on the IRB committee are listed on the webpage)
 - ii. This should include a detailed project description and a consent form. Additional forms may be necessary forms, depending on your particular study and level of review required.
 - iii. Make sure to keep copies of these forms for record keeping—this should be done independently.
2. Upon IRB approval, fill out the “Experiment Information Worksheet” and email it to the Participant Pool Coordinator (Prof. Jeremy Loebach, loebach@stolaf.edu). This document will be used to create an experiment for you in the Moodle site, and allow the department staff to grant credit for your participants. Each experiment will appear as a separate assignment, and after a student has participated in your experiment, they will be granted credit in the grade book feature.
 - A. Be sure to indicate any student researchers who need to have access to the Moodle site and Google document for participant sign-ups (by default, only faculty members, department staff, and students in the Intro classes have access to these materials) and any special instructions for the departmental staff.
3. Reserve a room or location for your study.
4. In your St Olaf email account, a Google Document spreadsheet “Research Participation Sign Up Sheet” exists for the current semester. This document will be used to add time slots for which students can sign up for your experiment. All students registered in Principles of Psychology will have read and write access to this document, and will be able to view and sign up for experiments at any time of day. Only students in the course, and faculty and staff in the department will have access to this document.
 - A. Look over the document and make sure that you have all of the information necessary to complete the form (some items may be designated as “NA” depending on your particular study). Please see the "Sample tab" for an example.
 - B. Find an open experiment tab (Labeled “Experiment 1”, “Experiment 2“ etc.) on the bottom of the document and rename it with your experiment name.
 - C. Fill in the relevant information
 - i. Your name, email, experiment title, experiment description, date/time, and location are required fields.

- D. Time commitment, amount of credit received, and special instructions are helpful for the students signing up to participate and will likely help the study to run more smoothly.
 - E. If you are only recruiting a particular demographic (gender, age, class year, handedness etc.) be sure to indicate that in the “any qualifications for study” slot. Sometimes students ignore these requirements, so be sure to check their information when they arrive for the study.
 - F. If you are conducting an in lab experiment, fill in the days, times and number of open slots that will be available for students to participate.
 - i. If you have a limited number of time slots, please make note that students should not add additional time slots.
 - G. If you are conducting a web-based survey, please include a link for students to participate. Students will not need to sign up for these, and you will be responsible for keeping track of who has participated.
 - i. DO NOT have students participate and then put their names in the Google Document as proof that they completed the survey. We had trouble with this last semester.
 - ii. DO keep a list of students who participated and forward it to the appropriate department staff so that we can grant them credit.
 - iii. If you are using Survey Monkey, you can have them put their name and email as their way of indicating informed consent to participate on a separate page from the data. If you are using Form Creator you must ask them to indicate their name or email address otherwise we cannot track their participation. If you are concerned about subject identification influencing your data or about your data being linked with identifiable information, I strongly suggest NOT using Form Creator (unless you have a creative way of tracking their participation while getting around these issues).
 - H. If you are conducting an in lab study or survey that requires absolute confidentiality of your participants, please include instructions for them to contact you in order to schedule a time to participate (these documents, while much more secure than the public sign up sheets used in the past, can be seen by anyone who has been granted access, so be very clear if absolute anonymity is required).
 - I. Be sure to save changes to document before you close it.
5. Students are aware that new experiments are added all the time, and are encouraged to check the “sign up spreadsheet frequently for new experiments. If you would like to publicize an experiment, the Forum on the right hand panel of the Moodle site is an excellent way to do so.
- A. On the “Psych 125 Participant Pool” front page, there is a link called “add a new topic...” in the Latest News box at the right. This will open a dialog box that will allow you to contact all students registered in Principles of Psychology at once.
 - B. Enter a Subject and Message and click the “Post to forum” button at the bottom. This will send a mass mail (BCC’d) out to all users of the Moodle site, which will go to their St Olaf email account. It will also appear as a Forum announcement in the latest news tab.

- C. This is a great way to contact all people in every Psych 125 section at the same time, and a fantastic way to recruit for your study.
6. Keep track of students who sign up for your study. Check the “Research Participation Sign Up Sheet” often to add additional time slots as needed. Since students have access to these materials 24/7, time slots can fill very quickly.
 7. It is recommended that researchers send an email reminder to students who have signed up for their study the night before they signed up to participate. Be sure this information is clear and accurate.
 8. Once a student has participated in the study, be sure to debrief them on the experimental methods and goals, and give them a Research Credit Slip. Please fill out the TOP portion of the slip (Experiment name and number of credits). It is the responsibility of the student to fill out the remainder of the slip and put them in to the deposit box outside of the main Psychology Office (RNS 236). These slips are available in the office.
 - A. Be sure to keep track of which students actually show up for the study. This may be done in a separate excel workbook in your lab and can be cross checked with the participation slips that you give them during debriefing and the Moodle grade book.
 - B. Occasionally, discrepancies may arise, and the better records you keep will make it easier to figure out whether credit should be granted.