

Student Instructions

Please read this document in its entirety. It contains important information that you need to complete the research requirement as part of your course. If you fail to read the entire document, you may not receive credit for participation.

York College Research Requirement

Empirical research is an integral part of many disciplines in the social sciences. Exposure to research in practice enhances students' understanding of the field of study. Thus, students in introductory level courses in the social sciences should be exposed, experientially, to empirical research. By participating in research, students will understand research methods better, learn about how research is conducted and will hopefully become inspired to become involved in the conduct of research during their undergraduate career.

The Departments of Behavioral Science and Social Science requires that all students taking the courses listed below gain exposure to research and research practices in Psychology, Sociology, Social Work and Anthropology:

- Anthropology 101
- Anthropology 220
- Psychology 102
- Sociology 101
- Sociology 220
- Social Work 101
- Social Work 350
- Social Work 360

There are two major reasons for this research requirement: First, it provides students and faculty with an organized participant pool that enables them to conduct human research at York College. Second, it provides a valuable educational experience for students by a) exposing you first-hand to the techniques and procedures of research in the social sciences, b) giving you an understanding of the function of research and the

role of the researcher in psychology, and finally, c) offering you an opportunity to learn about your reactions to specific situations.

This exposure can be gained either by participating in ongoing research studies at York College, and/or research-related alternative assignments.

Below, you will find:

- an explanation of specific **procedures you will need to follow to meet the requirement**
- an explanation of both **research studies** and **research-related alternative assignments**
- the **"Students' Bill of Rights"** for the Research Pool
- **contact information** for the Research Pool Manager, Ms. Karen Manifold
- a list of **commonly asked questions** that students have raised about their research participation, and our answers.

Procedures for Meeting the Research Requirement

In order to complete the research requirement, you must complete 4 research participation credits by the day prior to the last day of classes. There are no extensions for this deadline.

Listed below are the options for completing the requirement and the steps you must take to complete them. Please read this information very carefully.

STEP 1: Creating an account on SONA

The first step in completing your research requirement is to create an account on our online Research Pool management system, **SONA**. You *must* create an account on SONA to receive any credit for completing the research requirement (even if you have created an account in a past semester).

The deadline for creating an account is approximately one month after the semester begins (e.g., October 1st in the fall; March 1st in the spring). If you do not

create an account by the deadline, you will not receive credit for completing the research requirement.

To create an account, visit [SONA](#).

Then, follow the instructions. Please take note of the following:

1. Make sure you use the above link to request an account! Other institutions use SONA also. If you just do a Google search for "SONA" you may end up registering for an account at another institution!
2. To request an account, click the "New Participant -- request an account here" link on the SONA welcome page. You must create a new account even if you have created an account in a prior semester.
3. Fill in your name and a **working email address**. Using your York email account is *strongly recommended* as the York account seems to be most accepting of emails sent from the system. These emails typically contain important information such as your login information, reminders for studies, updates regarding deadlines and available activities.
4. Make up a memorable user ID.
5. Under "Course," find your instructor's name and the semester in which you are taking the course. For example, if your instructor for Spring 2015 is Dr. Smith, you would select "Spring15 Smith." If you are enrolled in two courses *simultaneously*, both of which require Research Pool participation, please select both courses (you only have to complete the Research Pool requirement once for both courses). **Note:** It is very important that you select the *correct instructor and semester* from this list! Instructors log in to the system directly to determine whether you have completed your credits. If they do not see your name on their course list, they will not be able to give you credit for credit completion.
6. Click on Request Account.
7. Your username and a password will be emailed to you immediately. (If not, please check your Spam folder and make sure to allow notifications from yorkcollege-admin@sona-systems.net).
8. Make a note of the 5-digit Participant ID you are assigned when you create your account. Research administrators will need this code to assign your credits.

9. Log-in with your username and password as they were sent to you (you can change your password after you log-in).
10. **Please do this once only!** If you forget your username and password or make a mistake when entering any of your information, do not create another account! Instead, contact the [Research Pool Manager](#) for help retrieving the information you initially entered.

STEP 2: Registering for Activities

Once you have created your account, you will then be able to view the descriptions of all available activities and sign up for the activities in which you would like to participate. These activities will include both **research studies** and **research-related alternative assignments**. More information regarding each type of activity is provided below in the sections devoted to each.

To sign up for activities:

1. Log in to the SONA system.
2. Click on the “Study Sign Up” section. You will see a list of activities (both Research Studies and research-related Study Alternative assignments) with open time slots. Click on any activity to read the description. If you find no activities available when you check the web site, do not worry. Activities are updated on the web throughout semester as they become available. Sometimes they do not appear until a week or so into the semester. Try to make a habit of logging in as frequently as possible throughout the semester to check for open activities until you complete all 4 credits.
3. **Read the activity descriptions *thoroughly*, prior to signing up.** This is important for several reasons:
 - Activity descriptions tell you whether you are eligible to participate in a given activity. You may not be eligible to participate in all available activities. Research studies usually have specific criteria for eligibility (for example, certain age or demographic requirements) that are clearly described in the summary descriptions on SONA. **Note:** If you show up for an activity for which you are not eligible because you failed to take note

of the criteria for eligibility in the study description, you will be turned away without receiving any credit for showing up!

- Activity descriptions contain details that will help you determine whether a given activity is appropriate for and/or interesting to you.
- Activity descriptions will give you information regarding the number of points you can earn for participation.

4. Once you read the activity description, you can click on the "Time Slots" link to view available dates and times during which you can complete the activity. You will receive an email confirming that you have signed up. You should also see your appointment under the "My Schedule" tab. After you have signed up for an appointment, please double check that you have signed up correctly either by checking your email for the confirmation, or the "My Schedule" tab for your study!

5. If you sign up for an activity that is designated at a specific time and location, make sure you show up at that time and location! If you do not show up for an appointment without prior notification, or if you show up late, you will not be able to sign up for another activity using the SONA system. You will need to visit the [Research Pool Manager](#) in person to sign up for activities and you will be limited to participation in certain Research Alternatives.

6. Be sure to bring your SONA-assigned identity code for in-person appointments.

7. If you need to cancel your enrollment in an activity on SONA, you may do so without penalty up to 24 hours prior to your appointment time by clicking on "Cancel" under the "My Schedule" tab. If for some reason you have an emergency and you have to cancel *within* 24 hours of the appointment, please email the researcher directly. The researcher's email can be found under "Study Information", by clicking on the name of the study in the "My Schedule" tab.

STEP 3: Obtaining Your Research Credits

Students are required to obtain 4 credits per course to fulfill the requirement. The absolute deadline for participation is one day prior to the last day of classes.

All 4 credits must be earned to get any course credit for completion. Partial credit in your course is not given for fewer than 4 earned credits. If you obtain any less than the 4 required credits, you will not get any course credit for completion of the activities.

- If you are a student in **Psychology 102**, then 4 SONA credits are worth 10% of your grade in the course. This 10% is only applied if you earn all 4 credits. If you earn any less than 4 SONA credits, you will not receive any of the 10%.
- For students in **Anthropology, Sociology, or Social Work** courses that are participating in Research Pool, then 4 SONA credits are worth 5% of your grade in the course. This 5% is only applied if you earn all 4 credits. If you earn any less than 4 SONA credits, you will not receive any of the 5%.

The number of credits per study/assignment is based upon the amount of time required to participate in the activities. Each research credit is worth approximately one hour of participation in the activities (i.e., up to one hour of participation time = 1 credit, more than one hour = 2 credits, more than two hours = 3 credits, etc.). Additional credits are earned if an activity requires your physical presence on campus or if the activity requires multiple sessions for completion. The number of credits an activity is worth is always posted in the activity description.

You will likely need to complete several different activities to obtain all 4 required credits. You can complete any combination of research studies and research-related alternative assignments to earn the 4 credits. If you check for available activities and find that there are too few to fulfill your 4-credit requirement immediately, please be patient and check the system regularly. The system is frequently updated during the semester. Studies and alternative assignments will appear and disappear based upon a variety of factors (e.g., appointment availability; time restrictions for research). The best way to make sure you can complete the research requirement in a timely fashion is to check for available activities regularly (e.g., once or twice per week), and sign up and complete them as soon as they become available! Please be assured that there will be an adequate number of activities over the course of the semester to fulfill the 4-credit requirement!

If you are registered for more than one course, all of which require participation in the research pool, you need to complete only 4 credits total for the semester. Just be sure to select all the courses for which you are registered when you sign up for your account on SONA.

When you complete an activity, you should receive an email from the SONA system within 48 hours (unless otherwise specified in the study description) confirming that you have been allotted the credits you earned. If you participate in an activity and do not receive credits in a timely fashion, please feel free to contact the activity administrator (the contact information will be in the activity description on SONA) and/or the [Research Pool Manager](#).

You may participate in any activity only once! If you participated in the Research Pool in a prior semester, you cannot participate in the same activities again to earn SONA credits.

Research Studies

Research studies are any activities listed on SONA that are *not* labeled as “Research Alternative.”

Eligibility

You must be 18 years of age or older to participate in research. If you are under 18, you must complete “Research Alternative” activities. If your 18th birthday is during the semester, you may participate in research studies after your birthday.

Please be sure to read study descriptions accurately to determine whether you are eligible to participate in a study. Even if you are 18 years of age, you may not be eligible to participate in all available studies. Research studies usually have specific criteria for eligibility (for example, certain age or demographic requirements). These are fully explained in the study description on SONA. If you show up for a study for which you are not eligible, you will be turned away without receiving credit!

If you decide to participate in an online study, make sure to complete the study within two days of signing up. Waiting longer will cause problems. In addition, be sure to answer all questions completely and accurately. Failure to complete the questions

accurately can lead investigators to draw false conclusions about your data. This not only leads to flawed research, but clear evidence of such abuse may lead to a deduction in the number of credits you will earn because you may be withdrawn from the study prior to completion. If you prefer not to answer the questions in any given study, the correct (and responsible) course of action once you are enrolled, is to email the researcher to withdraw from the study and participate in another study or research alternative instead.

All studies in which you may participate have been approved by the CUNY Institutional Review Board (the IRB, the committee overseeing the protection of human research participants at CUNY).

Your Rights as a Participant in a Research Study

1. You are entitled to have the nature of your participation explained to you before you agree to participate.
2. Participation in research is *always* voluntary. You may elect to participate in research-related alternative assignments if you do not wish to participate in a research study. You may refuse to participate in any study at any time, for any reason.
3. You may withdraw from an experiment at any time, for any reason without penalty. If this occurs, you will receive credits in proportion to the amount of time you have devoted to participation.
4. You may request that the data you provide be destroyed and not used in any way. There is no penalty or loss of credit if your data are destroyed.
5. It is the responsibility of the researcher to make the experiment an educational experience for you by providing information about the nature and purpose of your participation as soon as possible. A discussion of the results of the study will be available to you as soon as the data are all collected and analyzed.
6. If you arrive on time for an appointment but the experimenter is not there, you should inform the Research Pool Manager. If you feel that your rights have been violated or you wish to make any complaints for any reason, you may contact the [Research Pool Manager](#).

Research-Related Alternative Activities

Research-related alternative activities are designated on SONA as “Research Alternative” next to the title of the activity.

All students are eligible to participate in research-related alternative activities. There are no age or demographic restrictions on these activities. There are a variety of activities from which to choose at different times throughout the semester. Examples of such activities *may* include any of the following:

- writing reports based on scientific journal articles
- completing an online ethics training program
- participating in student-centered workshops taking place on campus
- participating in sample studies for which data collected will not be analyzed and will be destroyed at the end of the semester
- attending research presentations offered by faculty and/or students at York College

The activities that are available will vary from semester to semester. Please do not assume that because you or someone you know completed an alternative assignment for a course in a prior semester that the same assignment will be an acceptable alternative in the current semester. As stated above, you may only complete any given activity once. If you encounter difficulties being able to complete any activities that are available because you have already completed them in a prior semester, please contact the [Research Pool Manager](#) for assistance as soon as this comes to your attention.

Research Requirement Frequently Asked Questions

I have read this document entirely, but I am still confused about the research requirement. What should I do?

Please speak with your instructor and/or contact the [Research Pool Manager](#). Ask as many questions as you need to until the answers are clear.

I can't log on to SONA. What should I do?

Email, call or visit the Research Pool Manager.

Why are there no studies listed on SONA?

Studies are offered based upon when researchers are ready to conduct their studies. There will be enough studies for all students to get credit! That's guaranteed.

Usually, it takes a few weeks for researchers to begin to post studies. Then there are ample studies for at least eight more weeks. Then, as the semester nears the end, studies drop off. Students should check SONA for new studies and/or time slots at least a couple of times per week.

I completed my activity, but the credits are marked as “pending” on SONA. What does that mean?

After you complete an activity, the researcher needs to log your credits in the SONA system. Usually this takes a day or two. If, after 48 hours it still says pending, then contact the researcher directly. If you do not receive a response from the researcher, feel free to contact the [Research Pool Manager](#).

I showed up for a study but the researcher refused to admit me. Why?

First, you may not be qualified to be in the experiment. You may not have read carefully the description and the participant requirements.

Second, you may have arrived too late for the session. Remember, researchers are not required to let people in late!

Third, you may not have signed up for the session.

I was unable to show up to my session and was unable to contact the researcher ahead of time to reschedule/cancel. I got an email that I was an “unexcused no-show.” Can I sign up for this experiment again?

You cannot sign up for the study again using the SONA system. SONA does not permit participants to sign up for the same study twice. In addition, once you have an “unexcused no-show,” you may only participate in research alternatives, and you must visit the [Research Pool Manager](#) *in person* to do so.

However, if you had a real emergency that prevented you from contacting the researcher in advance or the researcher was unreachable prior to your appointment for cancellation, you may contact the researcher directly and explain your circumstances. The researcher has the option of rescheduling at his/her discretion. The researcher is not required to accept your excuse. If the researcher is unwilling to reschedule your session, you will be limited to completing alternative assignments.

How do I contact an activity coordinator or researcher?

Researcher contact information is always in the study description section on the SONA website.

When should I contact a researcher?

Contact researchers when something about their study is in question. For example, it was an online study and something went wrong with the webpage during the study or you haven't received credit after two weeks.

The description of the activity I chose on SONA says one thing, but I am getting conflicting information from either the researcher or the instructor. I am confused. What do I do?

When in doubt, the written instructions on this website and on SONA should be followed and the Research Pool Manager should be notified as soon as possible that conflicting information is being disseminated. If any instructions are not clear, please contact the [Research Pool Manager](#), Karen Manifold.

Contact Information for the Research Pool Manager

[Ms. Karen Manifold](#)