Psychology
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

PSY100 Pool 2025-2026

Principles and Procedures for Using the PSY100 Participant Pool

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THE PSY100 PARTICIPANT POOL: RATIONALE AND CONDITIONS

The rules concerning the PSY100 Participant Pool are designed to (a) provide a valuable educational experience for PSY100 students reinforced by earning academic credit for participation, (b) facilitate approved research in the Department that has received prior ethics clearance, and (c) minimize issues arising for students and researchers.

Eligibility to Access the PSY100 Pool:

The guidelines below were developed in order to clearly establish who is permitted access to the PSY100 pool given that the pool is a limited resource. These guidelines will be reviewed periodically and may be amended as necessary. The following people are eligible to use the PSY100 participant pool:

1. Faculty with a primary budgetary appointment at the St. George campus Psychology Department and members of their lab (e.g., postdocs, graduate student supervisees, undergraduate project students) are eligible to use the PSY100 pool.

2. Requests from faculty without budgetary appointments will be considered in exceptional circumstances (e.g., when a cross- or status-only appointed faculty member supervises a St. George Psychology undergraduate project student). **Note that ethics approval must be obtained from the UofT Office of Research Services and any in-person testing must be done on the St. George campus.**

3. Please note that there may be exceptions to the above guidelines when special circumstances arise. The PSY100 Participant Pool Committee reserves the right to render decisions on a case-by-case basis in the event of exceptional situations.

4. All experimenters must have a UTORid and UofT email address so that both the PSY100 pool coordinator and participants can contact the experimenter.

Study Scheduling, Study Length, and SONA Credits:

An experimental session can last for either **30 minutes** or **one hour**. Experimenters requiring more than one hour will need prior approval from the PSY100 Pool Coordinator (psy100.experiments@utoronto.ca). Note that an experiment can last for **no more than 2 hours** in total. Also note that there may be a maximum number of study hours per experiment per semester. The PSY100 Pool Committee reserves the right to implement a maximum number in order to fairly meet demand.

All studies in the SONA system must be awarded with SONA credit, not other forms of payment. Recruitment for paid studies must occur outside the SONA pool. One credit is awarded for completion of a one-hour study, whereas a half-credit is awarded for completion of a 30-minute study.

All experiments using the PSY100 Participant Pool must be scheduled on or before the last day of classes each term, as the last day of class is the final date by which PSY100 students must complete their research participation requirement.

All researchers must award credits within 48 hours after study completion.

GAINING ACCESS TO THE PSY100 PARTICIPANT POOL

Please note that it is not required that every member of a lab have a SONA account. Only those responsible for scheduling and running PSY100 participants and those administering the project (e.g. faculty supervisor, post-doctoral fellow, graduate student, or lab manager) are required to have a SONA account. If you are unsure if you or a member of your lab is required to have a SONA account, please contact the Pool Coordinator at psy100.experiments@utoronto.ca.

If you determine you need a SONA account, a formal contract must be signed and emailed to the Pool Coordinator to be granted a "Researcher" account (see full instructions below "How To Setup a Researcher Account"). Note that to ensure accountability, all researchers who are running the participants in the experiment and all researchers who are administering the study must be linked to the study on SONA and are held responsible for adhering to all PSY100 pool ethics and polices as noted in this document.

How To Setup a Researcher Account:

1. Submit a contract (please see Appendix B) signed via email to psy100.experiments@utoronto.ca
    a. Be sure to include the UTORid of the account requester.
    b. The Pool Contract must be signed by the faculty supervisor and list all personnel who will interact with PSY100 participants, affirming they have read all the relevant material and have agreed to comply with the PSY100 Participant Pool Procedures as outlined in this document.
    c. The contract is available here Pool Contract
2. The Pool Coordinator will review the Pool Contract and create Researcher accounts on SONA
    a. Log in information is will be emailed to you once the account has been created.
3. SONA Web Address: https://utsgpsych.sona-systems.com/
4. Use your UTORID information to login as a Researcher

Preparing Materials for Study Approval:

Once your SONA account is setup the following steps are required to gain access to students in PSY100 as participants. **Important note: the application process is paperless. That is, all materials are submitted electronically either over the SONA system or via email to psy100.experiments@utoronto.ca. No hard copies will be accepted. Submitting hard copies may result in considerable delays, as we will not be checking the physical mailbox with any regularity.**

1. Obtain written approval of your study and of your *Participant Consent Form* from the Human Ethics Committee. (We will need this information to deal with questions students might raise concerning the ethics of your study.)

2. Refer to Appendix A, which provides instructions for preparing the *Debriefing Package* for the PSY100 students who will be participants in your experiment.
    a) The *Debriefing Package* content should be clear, readable and at a level suitable to enhance the educational benefits for the students of their participation as participants.
    b) Allow for feedback and modification from the PSY100 Pool Coordinator of a draft of your *Debriefing Package*. (Once submitted and approved, the *Debriefing Package* cannot be altered in any way without being cleared in writing with the PSY100 Pool Coordinator.)

3. Prepare a set of six simple straight-forward test questions about the research design and method of your experiment, one of which you will select randomly to ask the student as part of the debriefing procedures.
    a) The function of asking the question is not so much to "test" the students as it is to encourage and reinforce the educational aspect of their experience as the basis for giving them the academic credit.

4. Login to the SONA system and add a new study, and fill in its details.
    a) To do so, log in to your account and click "+ Create a new study"
    b) Specify the type of study: Standard Study, Online External, or Online Internal Survey (this is the study type used for OMT questions) and number of Parts (1, 2, 3, or 4).
    c) Fill in study details, including a brief description, study time (in 30 minute increments), credits, and any other information.
    d) You can place restrictions, such as previous experiments or specific demographic characteristics. (It ***is*** appropriate to indicate restrictions such as male or female, or right- or left-handed persons. It is ***not*** appropriate, however, to post "special" messages or inducements, such as "ONLY 20 MINUTES!")

5. Email the following material to the psy100 pool coordinator at psy100.experiments@utoronto.ca:
    a) a copy of the approval form for your study from the Human Ethics Committee.
    b) a copy of the *Participant Consent Form* approved by the Human Ethics Committee.
    c) if recruiting participants by email, a copy of your script approved by the Human Ethics Committee.
    d) a copy of your Ethics approved *Debriefing Letter*.
    e) a copy of the six questions and answers
    f) the Checklist, with Part I and Part IV filled-in. The checklist is available at:
        a) https://www.psych.utoronto.ca/resources/department-resources

6. Upon submission of this material, the coordinator will review your application documents and study on SONA. Once the application is approved you will be able to begin recruiting through SONA.

PENALTIES IMPOSED FOR FAILING TO MEET ONE'S OBLIGATIONS TO PARTICIPANTS

Awarding Credits:

Participant credits are awarded by the researcher through the SONA system. Participant appointments are "resolved" by either giving credit ("Grant Credit") or indicating that the participant failed to keep the appointment (a "Unexcused No-Show" or "Excused No-Show"). Students who are marked as "Unexcused No-Show" receive a penalty credit of -1 (minus one).

Appointments must be resolved as soon as possible after they end because students expect and deserve to receive their credit promptly. Given the importance and simplicity of assigning credits, we require that appointments be resolved within 48 hours.

If you have unresolved appointments, SONA will notify the Administrator after 48 hours and your account may be suspended should these timeslots remain unresolved. If your account is suspended you must contact the PSY100 Pool Coordinator (psy100.experiments@utoronto.ca) to have it reactivated. While your account is suspended you will not be able to post new appointments or change existing ones.

Appointments:

If you post a timeslot on SONA, it is your responsibility as the experimenter to be there for the session. Please take care not to post timeslots if you are not sure you can attend, and do your utmost to avoid cancelling appointments.

In the rare case where you must cancel an appointment with a student, you must email them at least 24 hours prior to the experiment to notify them and offer to reschedule. You cannot unbook students without notice. If you must unbook them, please send an email to the student at least 24 hours prior to the experiment explaining the reason and offering to reschedule, if possible.

If an experimenter misses an experiment and the student participant shows up and has to wait, credit must be granted to the student immediately and the student will not be available to participate in this particular experiment in the future.

Sanctions and Penalties:

Sanctions on those researchers who fail to meet their obligations to their participants are the following:

First failure to meet obligations: researcher will be contacted by a member of the participant pool committee.

Second failure to meet obligations: researcher and researcher's supervisor will be contacted by a member of the participant pool committee.

Third failure to meet obligations: researcher will be denied access to the participant pool for the remainder of that semester and for the following semester (e.g., infraction occurs during the first summer term, researcher will be banned for both summer terms).

Use of the PSY100 participant pool may not be appropriate for all studies.

The participant pool committee therefore reserves the right, in some cases, to restrict the use of the participant pool.

APPENDIX A: PREPARING THE DEBRIEFING PACKAGE

Each student receives your *Debriefing Package* upon serving as a participant, or as an observer, in your experiment. It consists of two parts. Part I is your debriefing letter. The letter must explain your study in language appropriate for PSY100 students (e.g., avoid jargon that wouldn't be covered in psy100). Specifically, the letter must include:

1. The general area of psychology in which the experiment belongs
2. Brief summary of background or problem
3. General description of the experiment
4. Specific hypotheses tested, if any
5. Independent variable(s)
6. Dependent variable(s)
7. Control procedures (indicate if none used)
8. Implications for theory or for practice
9. A reference to the current literature (without abbreviations)
10. A reference to relevant pages in the PSY100 text*

The independent and dependent variables and the control procedures must be EXPLICITLY mentioned (e.g., "the independent variable was X" rather than "we manipulated X" or "the dependent variable was Y" rather than "we measured Y") – remember psy100 students are just learning these concepts so be as clear and explicit as possible. Often there is no simple control condition. In these cases it is usually possible to talk about random assignment to conditions or some variable you held constant. But if you truly have no control procedures, instead give a brief explanation of why not.

*A copy of the PSY100 textbook will be available in the Pool Coordinators Office (SS 4038) for reference.

APPENDIX B: POOL CONTRACT

All personnel who will be involved in testing PSY100 participants must sign the contract.

One contract is sufficient to cover all experiments in a laboratory, but each experimenter MUST sign the contract.

If additional experimenters join the lab after you have submitted the original contract they must sign and submit an amendment to the contract.

Submit a digital copy of the signed contract to PSY100.experiments@utoronto.ca.