Northern Kentucky University
Department of Psychological Science
Human Subjects Policy

About This Document
This document describes the policies of the Department of Psychological Science at Northern Kentucky University regarding research involving human subjects. This document describes the rights and responsibilities of students who participate in such research (red font), researchers who conduct such research (blue font), and instructors who allow their students to participate in such research for credit (green font).

Experiment Management System
The Department of Psychological Science leases software developed by Sona Systems, Ltd. This software product is an online experiment management system. In order to access the experiment management system, please go to the web address listed below.

http://nku.sona-systems.com/

The Sona Systems, Ltd. experiment management software complies with all major regulations governing human subject research and privacy of data stored online. This system complies with both HIPAA and Common Rule for customers in the United States.

System Administrator
The local administrator for the Sona system is Dr. Kim Breitenbecher. Please feel free to contact Dr. Breitenbecher with any questions about the Sona system. Dr. Breitenbecher’s contact information is listed below.

Dr. Kim Breitenbecher
Associate Professor
Department of Psychological Science
MEP 357 (enter through MEP 337)
Northern Kentucky University
Highland Heights, KY 41099
(859) 572-5519
breitenbeche@nku.edu
Participants’ Rights and Responsibilities

1. Sona

The Sona experiment management system allows you to do the following tasks online:
• browse a list of currently available experiments (some of which are laboratory-based studies, and some of which are online studies)
• schedule appointments to participate in laboratory-based studies
• cancel appointments to participate in laboratory-based studies
• check your list of scheduled appointments for laboratory-based studies
• participate in online studies
• assign research credits to particular courses in which you are enrolled
• check the number of credits you have earned

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_1OnT2ZU6QQ

You are responsible for understanding and implementing the instructions and information provided in the video described above. If you have any questions about this video, or about the experiment management system in general, please contact your instructor or the local Sona administrator, Dr. Kim Breitenbecher, at breitenbeche@nku.edu.

2. Eligibility requirements

Studies listed on Sona may provide information about eligibility requirements (e.g., age, gender, etc.). If you do not meet the eligibility requirements for a particular study, you should not sign up for that study. You will not be able to participate, and you will not receive credit.

3. Laboratory-based vs. online studies

By signing up for an experiment, you are informing the researcher of your intent to participate. In the case of a laboratory-based study, you will schedule an appointment to be present at the specified location (i.e., the lab) at the specified date and time. In the case of an online study, you will respond to a series of questions online. You can respond to online surveys from any computer with an internet connection.

4. Research credit

If you participate in an experiment (online or laboratory-based), you will receive research credit. The amount of credit that you receive will depend upon whether the study in which you participate is an online study or a laboratory-based study. The amount of research credit that a study is worth is listed on the Sona sign-up page.
Online studies:

Each 15 minutes is worth 1 research credit. Thus, an online study that takes 15 minutes to complete is worth 1 research credit. An online study that takes 30 minutes to complete is worth 2 research credits. An online study that takes 45 minutes to complete is worth 3 research credits, etc. In most cases, your research credit for participation in a particular study will be posted on Sona within 24 hours after you complete the online study.

Laboratory-based studies:

Each 15 minutes is worth 3 research credits. Thus, a laboratory-based experiment that takes 30 minutes to complete is worth 6 research credits. A laboratory-based study that takes 45 minutes to complete is worth 9 research credits, etc. In most cases, your research credit for participation in a particular study will be posted on Sona within 24 hours after you complete the experiment.

5. Psy 100 research credit requirement

With two exceptions (noted below), students who are taking Psy 100 are required to earn a minimum of 15 research credits.

Your instructor will be able to access a record of your research credits. Your instructor can tell you how many points each research credit is worth. Please check with your instructor to clarify his or her policy regarding this issue.

Please note that, in all classes, it is unethical for instructors to require their students to participate as subjects in research. Thus, instructors who require you to earn research credit must also provide alternate assignments (e.g., research papers, PsycInfo assignments) in order to fulfill any research credit requirements.

Please note the following:
• Students who are taking Psy 100 during any summer term are NOT required to earn research credits.
• Students who are taking Psy 100 at their local high school are NOT required to earn research credits.

6. Other psychology courses

Your instructor may or may not require you to earn research credits. Similarly, your instructor may or may not allow you to earn research credits for extra-credit. Please talk with your instructor to clarify this issue.

7. Right to decline
You have the right to decline to participate in any study. As noted above, it is unethical for instructors to require their students to participate as subjects in research. Thus, instructors who require you to earn research credit must also provide alternate assignments (e.g., research papers, PsycInfo assignments) in order to fulfill any research credit requirements.

8. **Right to cancel**

You have the right to cancel an appointment that you have scheduled to participate in a laboratory-based study. If you find that you are unable to attend the appointment, it is very important that you cancel your appointment.

There are two ways to cancel your appointment.

- You can login to Sona and cancel your appointment through Sona. This is the preferred method.
- You can email the researcher to let him/her know that you will not be able to attend. (The researcher’s email address is listed on the Sona sign-up page.)

If you wish to cancel, you must do so **prior to the start time of your appointment.**

9. **No shows**

If you fail to attend an appointment, without canceling prior to the start of the appointment, your failure to attend will be considered a “no show.” If you **no show twice, your Sona account will become limited.** This means that you will be able to login to Sona (to view a list of the credits you have earned, for example), but **you will NOT be able to sign-up for any additional studies on Sona.** Thus, if you want to (or are required to) earn additional research credits, you must complete the alternative research assignment(s) designated by your instructor.

10. **Be on time**

It is very important to be on time for laboratory-based studies. In most cases, participants who arrive late will not be permitted to participate in the experiment. **If you arrive late, and are not able to participate, you will be considered an unexcused no-show.**

11. **Right to withdraw**

You have right to withdraw from any study. In the case of a laboratory-based experiment, simply inform the researcher that you wish to withdraw. In the case of an online study, simply exit the survey.

Please note that, for both laboratory-based and online studies, **if you withdraw prior to completing the study, you may not receive full credit for the study.**
12. **APA ethics code**

Please be advised that researchers in the Department of Psychological Science at NKU must conduct their research according to ethical guidelines established by the American Psychological Association. If you wish to review the APA's ethical guidelines with respect to research, please click on the following link:

http://www.apa.org/ethics/code/index.aspx#8

13. **Informed consent**

You have the right to receive sufficient information about a study, prior to participating in it, that you can make an informed decision about whether you wish to participate. According to the American Psychological Association, the elements of informed consent include the following:

- the purpose of the research, expected duration, and procedures
- their right to decline to participate and to withdraw from the research once participation has begun
- the foreseeable consequences of declining or withdrawing
- reasonably foreseeable factors that may be expected to influence their willingness to participate such as potential risks, discomfort, or adverse effects
- any prospective research benefits
- limits of confidentiality
- incentives for participation
- whom to contact for questions about the research and research participants' rights. You should have the opportunity to ask questions and receive answers

14. **Questions?**

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact your instructor or the researcher in charge of a particular study. (The Sona sign-up page will include the researcher’s name and contact information.) You can also contact the Sona administrator, Dr. Kim Breitenbecher, with any concerns. You can reach Dr. Breitenbecher in her office, MEP 357 (enter through MEP 337). Dr. Breitenbecher's telephone number is 859-572-5519. Her email address is breitenbeche@nku.edu.
Researchers’ Rights and Responsibilities

1. Read “Participants’ Rights and Responsibilities”

You are responsible for understanding the information contained in the section of this document titled “Participants’ Rights and Responsibilities.”

2. Sona

The Sona experiment management system allows you to do the following tasks online:

- post sign-up pages for laboratory-based and online studies
- collect data (in the case of online studies)
- manage your laboratory schedule (i.e., schedule sessions, cancel sessions)
- communicate with participants
- assign research credits
- designate no shows for laboratory-based sessions as excused or unexcused.

To view a video tutorial for researchers, please click on the following link:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ec8S3xfO-a8

You are responsible for understanding and implementing the instructions and information provided in this video. If you have any questions about this video, or about the experiment management system in general, please contact your faculty supervisor or the local Sona administrator, Dr. Kim Breitenbecher, at breitenbeche@nku.edu.

3. Faculty supervisor

If you are a student, your research activities are under the supervision of your faculty supervisor. Please consult with your faculty supervisor before posting any studies on Sona.

4. Sona roles

Each Sona user can have one or more roles (e.g., participant, researcher, instructor, etc.). If you wish to use Sona to post sign-up pages and collect data, you must first set up your Sona account. The default role for a new account is participant.

5. Adding the researcher role

If you are a student, and you wish to have the researcher role added to your Sona account, you must first take the survey titled “Researcher Quiz.” This survey is essentially a quiz over the information contained in this Human Subjects Policy document. After you have completed the survey, you must email Dr. Breitenbecher
to let her know. She will review your responses and, if you have scored at least 80%, she will add the researcher role to your Sona account. If you have not scored at least 80%, Dr. Breitenbecher will notify you of your need to re-take the survey. Dr. Breitenbecher’s email address is listed below.

breitenbeche@nku.edu

6. **IRB approval**

Your study may or may not require IRB review. You should discuss this issue with your faculty supervisor. If your study does require IRB approval, you are responsible for obtaining this approval prior to making your study active on Sona.

For more information about the process of IRB review, please go to the website listed below:

[https://inside.nku.edu/rgc/research-compliance/irb.html](https://inside.nku.edu/rgc/research-compliance/irb.html)

7. **APA ethics code**

You are responsible for following American Psychological Association guidelines with respect to the ethical conduct of research. Please discuss this issue with your faculty supervisor. In order to review the APA’s ethical guidelines with respect to research, please go to the web address listed below.


8. **Informed consent**

You must provide your participants with sufficient information in order for them to make an informed decision about whether to participate in your study. According to the American Psychological Association, this information includes the following elements:

- the purpose of the research, expected duration, and procedures
- their right to decline to participate and to withdraw from the research once participation has begun
- the foreseeable consequences of declining or withdrawing
- reasonably foreseeable factors that may be expected to influence their willingness to participate such as potential risks, discomfort, or adverse effects
- any prospective research benefits
- limits of confidentiality
- incentives for participation
- whom to contact for questions about the research and research participants' rights.
9. **Research credit**

The amount of credit that a study is worth depends on how long the study is expected to take and whether the study is laboratory-based or online.

**Online studies:**

Each 15 minutes is worth 1 research credit. Thus, an online study that takes 15 minutes to complete is worth 1 research credit. An online study that takes 30 minutes to complete is worth 2 research credits. An online study that takes 45 minutes to complete is worth 3 research credits, etc. You should award credit to your participants within 24 hours of their survey completion.

**Laboratory-based studies:**

Each 15 minutes is worth 3 research credits. Thus, a laboratory-based experiment that takes 30 minutes to complete is worth 6 research credits. A laboratory-based study that takes 45 minutes to complete is worth 9 research credits, etc. You should award credit to your participants within 24 hours of their survey completion.

10. **Online internal surveys vs. online external studies**

Be aware that there are two separate types of online studies, those set up within Sona and those hosted by outside websites.

**Online internal surveys:**
You can use the survey creation tools available within Sona to create online surveys. This type of study is called an “online internal survey.”

**Online external studies:**
You can use outside websites (such as SurveyMonkey or Qualtrics) to create online surveys. Such surveys can then be linked to Sona, such that participants can sign-up for the online surveys through Sona, and then be taken to the outside websites to complete the surveys. This type of study is called an “online external study.”

11. **Issues related to credit for online studies**

**Online internal surveys:**
Sona will automatically award credit to participants who complete online internal surveys.

**Online external studies:**
It is possible to set things up so that Sona will automatically award credit to participants who complete online external studies. However, you must take
special steps in order for this to happen. If you would like to learn how to set up
your online external study so that your participants auto will automatically
receive credit, please contact Dr. Breitenbecher to schedule an appointment.

The important thing to remember is this: Unless you have taken the
necessary steps to set up your survey in the appropriate manner, participants
will NOT automatically receive credit for online external studies. Instead, you
must manually award credit to all participants who complete surveys
hosted by outside websites. Sona will NOT do so automatically.

12. Issues related to participant cancelations

Participants have the right to cancel their appointments for laboratory-based
sessions. They are allowed to cancel at any time prior to the start time of
the session.

One way for a participant to cancel an appointment is to do so through Sona.
This action essentially cancels the record of the participant’s sign up.

Another way for a participant to cancel a session is by contacting you directly
(usually via email). This action does not cancel the record of the
participant’s sign up. Instead, you will need to cancel the sign up using your
researcher screen.

13. No shows for laboratory-based sessions

Remember: Participants have the right to cancel their appointments for
laboratory-based sessions. They can do so through Sona or by contacting
you directly. They are allowed to cancel at any time prior to the start time
of the session.

If the start time for your session has passed, and the participant has not
arrived, be sure to check Sona to see whether the participant canceled at the
last minute. (This participant behavior is very annoying, but allowed.) If the
participant has not canceled, then you should designate the participant as an
unexcused no show.” If the participant later contacts you, and gives you a
good reason for why he/she didn’t show, you can (if you wish) change the
participant’s status to “excused no show.” You should discuss the issue of
which kinds of reasons for missing a session should be counted as “excused”
with your faculty supervisor.

If a participant earns 2 “unexcused no shows,” the participant’s Sona account
will be set to “limited.” This means that the participant will be able to login to
studies, but he/she will not be able to sign-up to participate in any additional
studies. “Excused no shows” do not cause a participant’s account to become
limited.
14. **Editing a participant’s credit**

You can edit a participant’s credit for your study at any time. Please see the video tutorial (the link is available under #1, above) for instructions on editing a participant’s credit.

15. **Participant age**

The study information page includes a field labeled “age restriction.” Depending on the characteristics of your study, it may be the case that individuals must be at least 18 years old to participate. You should discuss this issue with your faculty supervisor.

16. **Questions?**

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact your faculty supervisor or the local Sona administrator, Dr. Kim Breitenbecher. You can reach Dr. Breitenbecher in her office, MEP 357 (enter through MEP 337). Dr. Breitenbecher’s telephone number is 859-572-5519. Her email address is breitenbeche@nku.edu.
Instructors’ Rights and Responsibilities

1. Research credit requirement for Psy 100

One of the student learning outcomes for Psy 100 is for students to gain familiarity with psychological research. This familiarity includes improved understanding of such issues as the following: the tools needed to conduct psychological research (e.g., use of the PsycInfo database), the process of research (e.g., research design, collection of data), the results of previous psychological research, and the ethical principles that guide research.

In order to facilitate students’ achievement of this student learning outcome, as well as to support the research mission of the university, the Department of Psychological Science requires all students who are taking Psy 100 during any fall or spring term to earn a minimum of 15 research credits.

Please note that there are two exceptions to this requirement. Students who are taking Psy 100 during any summer term are NOT required to earn research credits. Students who are taking Psy 100 at their high school are NOT required to earn research credits.

Please note that you can assign any point value that you wish to these research credits. For example, the research credits might be worth 2%, 5%, 10%, etc. of a student’s grade.

One way for students to earn such credit is for them to participate as research subjects in studies posted on Sona, the Department’s online research participation management system. As you most likely know, it is unethical for instructors to require their students to participate as subjects in research. Thus, you must offer alternative ways (alternative assignments) through which students can earn research credit.

You have considerable latitude in implementing this policy. For example, you can decide:

1. what the nature of the alternative assignments will be. If you need suggestions for such assignments, you can consult Dr. Breitenbecher.
2. the percentage of each student’s total grade that the 15 required research credits will be worth
3. whether to allow students to earn additional research credits (beyond the 15 required research credits) as extra-credit

Dr. Kim Breitenbecher is the Sona administrator. She will create a Sona account for you. You will receive an email from the Sona system that contains your login information (specifically, your user ID and password). Your login information will be
sent to your NKU email account. If you prefer to use a different email account, please let Dr. Breitenbecher know.

Dr. Breitenbecher will also load your course onto the Sona system. When students login to Sona, they will be able to select your course from a drop-down menu. Students will be able to tell the system to assign the research credits that they earn to your course. At any time during the semester, you can login as an instructor and access a list of the research credits that students in your course have earned.

You can also use Sona to award something called “non-study credit.” You can use this feature to award credit for completion of alternative assignments (i.e., assignments other than participation as a subject in research to fulfill the research requirement).

2. **Research credit option for other psychology courses**

   If you teach a psychology course other than Psy 100, you have considerable discretion regarding the incorporation of research credits into your students’ grades. Such credits can be required (with one caveat; please see #3 below) or optional. In addition, such credits can reflect the percentage of a student’s final grade (e.g., 5%, 10%, etc.) that you deem appropriate. Lastly, you can decide how many points each research credit is worth (e.g., 1 research credit = 1 point, 1 research credit = 5 points, etc.). This decision should obviously be related to the total number of points available in your course.

3. **The need for an alternative way of earning research credit**

   Although you can require your students to earn a certain amount of research credit, you cannot require them to participate in research. Thus, you must provide some alternate research assignment (e.g., a research paper) for students who do not wish to participate in research. You can use the Sona experiment management system to award “non study credit grants” for the completion of such assignments.

4. **Participants’ rights and responsibilities**

   You are responsible for understanding the rights and responsibilities of students who participate in research. Please review the information contained in the section of this document titled “Participants’ Rights and Responsibilities.”

   In particular, please make sure you understand the policies regarding the following:
   - the awarding of credit for participation in research
   - the participant’s right to decline to participate in research
   - the participant’s right to withdraw from research
   - the participant’s right to give informed consent
   - the participant’s responsibility to cancel his or her appointment for a study that he or she cannot attend
• the definition of, and consequences of earning, an unexcused no show.

5. **Questions?**

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Sona administrator, Dr. Kim Breitenbecher. You can reach Dr. Breitenbecher in her office, MEP 357 (enter through MEP 337). Dr. Breitenbecher’s telephone number is 859-572-5519. Her email address is breitenbeche@nku.edu.