MTSU Psychology Department Policy Governing Use of the Psychology Research Pool

Revised Fall 2024

1. Research Pool Committee (per department bylaws)
   1. Purpose: To determine procedures, rules, and regulations on the structure and use of the subject pool.
   2. Voting: All changes must be approved by a 2/3 majority vote of the 1410 representatives and a 2/3 majority vote of the research representatives.
   3. Director: Elected by annual general faculty vote; may or may not be an elected committee member.
   4. Membership
      1. Three Psychology 1410 representatives, elected from and by fulltime faculty who will be teaching 1410 in the forthcoming academic year
      2. Three Research representatives, elected from and by fulltime faculty who (or had students who) needed the pool for research purposes during the past year or who will need it for the forthcoming year
      3. Other faculty volunteers
2. Research Pool Participation  
   1. **PSY 1410 Requirement** 
      1. All students in Psychology 1410 (in-person and online) are required to earn 5% of their grade through participation in psychological research or an equivalent written assignment.

# Exemption for Accelerated Format. Students in the accelerated schedule (less than full semester) PSY 1410 are not required to participate in the research pool.

* + 1. Students under 18 must complete a written report for credit.
    2. This is a class assignment, not “extra credit” and failing to meet this assignment will lead to a penalty in your grade of up to 5%.

# Sections of off-campus dual-enrollment PSY 1410 are exempt from the research requirement because many of the students are under 18.

* 1. **Optional participation for other psychology classes courses** - Students from psychology courses other than PSY 1410 may, at the discretion of their instructor, participate in the research pool for extra credit. Faculty wishing to participate must email the research pool director with information about their class to have it listed in SONA.

# Credit Values

# Credit Values. Each quarter hour (15 minutes) of research participation is worth 1 credit.

# Total Required. Students must complete 10 credits.

# In-Person Multiplier. The credit value for in-person studies will have a multiplier (incentive) bonus. The baseline multiplier is 1.5. For instance, a half-hour (2 credit) study in-person would be worth 3 credits and a one hour (4 credit) study would be worth 6 credits.

# Changing the Multiplier. The value of the multiplier for the upcoming semester will be set at each end-of-semester meeting of the research pool committee. The incentive rate change will be based on the fill rate from in-person studies and anticipated demand for the following semester, as reflected on the end-of-semester researcher survey.

# Emergency Changes to the Multiplier. If researchers are having trouble filling in-person studies, they may request an emergency meeting of the research pool committee, during which the committee would consider changing the multiplier mid-semester (e.g. changing from 1.5 to 2.0). Any such change would only modify the multiplier for current and future sign-ups to the in-person studies. There would be no retroactive change to credits earned from completed in-person studies.

* 1. **Pretesting**

# Pretesting. Pretesting will be used to help researchers target desired participants by restricting visibility of studies to eligible participants. System enrollment on SONA includes an optional prescreening survey that will be generated each semester by the faculty, approved by the IRB, and take no more than 15 minutes. This can be either be a required prescreen with the option to skip questions or if that is not possible a fully optional prescreen survey. Students who complete written reports must be able to access SONA without completing the prescreening survey.

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1. Written Reports
   1. Who Must do Written Reports
      1. Students who choose not to participate in research must do written reports.
      2. Students who are less than 18 years of age must do written reports.
      3. Students who cannot find enough credits through studies must do written reports.
   2. Articles: Students must choose from the articles that are posted on the research pool website each semester.
   3. Report form: Students must complete their work on the written report form and turn in their answers by email to [Research.Pool@mtsu.edu](mailto:Research.Pool@mtsu.edu) before the last day for research and reports. Reports must be in .docx format.
   4. Guidelines for Full and Partial Credit. Written reports are worth a maximum of 5 credits each. Students who are submitting only written reports must complete two of them.
2. Full credit (5 points). The report has been completed thoroughly, with responses demonstrating that the student carefully read the article and answered all the questions correctly. No more than one quoted sentence is included. Questions are answered using complete, grammatically correct sentences.
3. Partial credit (4 points). Most answers (at least 4) were completed thoroughly, while some were incomplete. No more than 2 quoted sentences are included.
4. Partial credit (3 points). At least 3 answers were completed thoroughly, while ½ (3 answers) were incomplete. No more than 2 quoted sentences are included.
5. Partial credit (2 points). Answers provide little evidence of student effort and/or indicate that the student did not completely read the article (e.g., minimal and incomplete sentences resulting in incomplete answers, fewer than 3 questions completed thoroughly). No more than 3 quoted sentences are included.
6. Partial credit (1 point). Same as partial credit for 2 points, but some questions are left unanswered by the student.  Four or more quoted sentences are included.
7. No credit (0 points). ANY evidence of plagiarism (copying more than three words in a row from the original article) will result in a zero for the entire report. Copying answers from another student also is considered plagiarism and will result in a zero on both students’ reports.  Any use of AI generated answers will also result in a 0 for the entire report.
8. Research Pool Users & Accounts
   1. The research pool is maintained to facilitate student and faculty research within psychology.
      1. Faculty and students from Psychology may be granted access.
      2. Researchers from outside of Psychology may be granted access by a majority vote of the committee. This is typically granted only in cases of excess pool capacity and is done after the mid-point of a semester.
   2. Researcher Approval Process and Account Duration
      1. Student researchers must complete a pool policy quiz and submit it following the proper procedure before receiving a researcher account on SONA.
      2. All student user accounts are deleted from the system after each academic year (not faculty accounts, they remain).
      3. New studies and new accounts cannot be added for an academic year until the end-of-year clean-out is complete.
9. Studies on the SONA System  
   1. Start and End Dates
      1. The first day to collect data is the first day of classes
      2. The last day to collect data and turn in papers is typically the Monday of the last full week of classes. The research pool director will set this date in advance of the coming semester and inform the faculty by email
   2. Approval Process and Duration
      1. Researchers must first obtain approval from the Institutional Review Board
      2. Studies are approved and activated by the pool director when the SONA system forms have been completed
      3. All studies are deleted at the end of each academic year.
      4. Researchers who wish to continue a study longer than an academic year must request by email to the pool director continuation on SONA before the last day of the Spring semester.
   3. Posting Timeslots and Assigning Credit
      1. ALL sessions must be run through the sign-up system. Even if you are calling students to make appointments, you MUST enter those appointments into the system BEFORE the research session. After ALL appointments, one of the following must be entered.
         1. Credit Granted
         2. Unexcused No-Show. This locks students out from participating in a study subsequently. Students who fail to attend or cancel an in-person or online appointment should be marked as unexcused no shows. Students who experienced personal emergencies can appeal this decision to the researcher and/or the research pool director.
         3. Excused No-Show. Students can appeal an unexcused no-show to the experimenter or research pool director when they have experienced an emergency that did not allow them to keep their in-person or online appointment or cancel within the designated time period.
      2. Failure to run studies through the research pool system that target the research pool participants can result in sanctions against the researcher and research supervisor.
      3. If participants choose to withdraw, online or in-person, they must receive credit earned up to the point of withdrawal. Researchers should make it clear that students withdrawing from online studies must click through to the end of the survey instruments (without answering further questions) to receive credit.
      4. Online Studies should be set to automatically grant credit upon completion.
      5. Credit for in-person studies (and online studies that do not automatically credit students) must be entered within seven (7) days of a research session. Failure to enter credits in a timely manner can result in sanctions against the researcher and the research supervisor.

# Cancellations and Participant No-Shows

# Participants may cancel up to 2 hours before a study appointment through the SONA system.

# Participants who fail to attend or cancel an in-person or online appointment should be recorded as *Unexcused No-Show* in SONA.

# Students can appeal an unexcused no-show to the experimenter or research pool director when they have experienced an emergency that did not allow them to keep their in-person or online appointment or cancel within the designated time period.

# Researcher No-Shows

# Researchers should try to never miss a session.

* + 1. In the event of a researcher no-show, contact the Research Pool Director (Research.Pool@mtsu.edu) as soon as possible. The Research Pool Director will issue credit to students after a researcher no-show; contacting the director will facilitate this process.

# Researchers with two or more no-shows will be referred for sanctioning (see section VI).

# Sanctioning Procedures

# Use of the research pool by researchers should be viewed as a privilege, not a right. Whereas research may be an important part of a person’s graduate work or teaching load, and may be required for promotion or tenure, access to the research pool to conduct said research is neither guaranteed nor implied. Use of the research pool can be terminated or suspended at any time following a minimum of due process.

# Any violation of research pool procedures that leads to one or more complaints from students, 1410 instructors, or other researchers can trigger committee action toward a warning, suspension, or termination of access.

# For written warning and suspension decisions, the voting members of the committee will include the three researcher representatives and the three 1410 representatives. If one (or more) of the voting members is subject to action, the accused member(s) will be excluded from the voting process.

# Written warnings may be issued by the voting members. Such warnings will be kept on file for two years and may be brought to bear (but are not required) in a later decision to terminate or suspend. The process for administration of an official warning will proceed as follows:

# Violations of procedure that warrant action (in the view of any member of the committee) will be brought to the attention of the committee.

# The responsible researcher will have an opportunity to present their side of the complaint.

# The committee will vote to serve a warning to the researcher. A warning will be issued if a simple majority of the committee members so vote.

# The process for termination or suspension will proceed as follows:

# Violations of procedure that warrant action (in the view of any member of the committee) will be brought to the attention of the committee.

# The responsible researcher will have an opportunity to present their side of the complaint.

# The committee will vote to terminate or suspend. If the offending researcher(s) is/are on the committee, unanimous agreement of the remaining committee members is required for termination or suspension. If the offending researcher is not a committee member, agreement of all but one member of the committee is required for termination or suspension.