

**Study Board Guidelines**  
**Western Kentucky University**  
**Department of Psychology and Department of Psychological Sciences**

*Note: This document is a guide for use of the Study Board. A copy of the Department policy regarding the Study Board can be acquired from the Study Board Administrator or the Head of the Psychology or the Head of the Psychological Sciences Department.*

**RATIONALE:** Psychology is a science. The principles that students learn from textbooks and in psychology courses were derived from scientific research studies. To enhance the students' understanding of the research process in psychology, most students in Introduction to Psychology are required to satisfy a research component. Students in other courses may also be given the option to or required to complete a research component. The research component of the course will involve the participation in research-related pedagogy during the semester in which the student is enrolled in a Psychology or Psychological Sciences course.

**DATES:** The Study Board will be effective for inclusive dates in each semester. No research credit can be earned before the *start* date of the semester and no credit will be given after the *end* date of the semester. This policy is intended to allow the Study Board Administrator and associated personnel sufficient time to manage the Study Board logistics at beginning and end of semesters. Participants must not participate before or after the designated dates, and Researchers must not arrange data collection sessions at any time outside of the designated dates. The inclusive dates for the Study Board will be included in the syllabus of each section of the course and will be posted on the registration material and other Study Board documents. Generally, participation will begin on the first day of each regular semester and will end on the Friday before finals week.

**REQUIREMENTS:** Students in all main-campus regular sections (i.e., on-campus sections during Fall and Spring semesters) of Introduction to Psychology are required to earn six (**6**) research credits. Students enrolled in the 5-week summer, Winter, May or Bi-term semesters are required to earn two (2) SPCs. Students may earn credit by any of the following means, in any combination: 1) The student may volunteer to serve as a research participant in an approved study being conducted by Western Kentucky University Psychology or Psychological Sciences faculty or students. The Human Subjects Review Board of the University will have approved all studies offered through the Study Board. Only participation in approved studies will be accepted for Study Board credit. 2) The student may take quizzes over an journal article during at a designated time. 3) The student may propose or ask for an equivalent alternative, which must be approved in advance by the Study Board Administrator. All students attempting to fulfill the research component will have an account established on the Study Board Experiment Management System (EMS; wku.sona-systems.com).

**Credits for research participation:** Credits for research participation are determined by the amount of time students are asked to commit, not on the particular outcome of their participation in a study. Credits will be determined in advance by the researcher and posted for the student's information. Only credits for which the student registers online may be used for research requirement credit. Credit will be assigned according to the following guidelines:

- At least one (1) credit will be earned for each half (1/2) hour of participation at a single session.
- If more than one session is required, the student will earn at least one (1) credit for each session.
- One (1) credit can also be earned for special circumstances for any research project. Special circumstances include multi-session participation, recruitment of a cohort, activities performed outside of a formal research session, etc.

**Credits for research article quizzes:** One half (0.5) of a credit will be earned for each satisfactorily completed article quiz.

**Credits for equivalent alternatives:** Credits for any alternative to the studies or summaries will be determined in advance when the alternative assignment is approved.

**Reporting Student Credits:** At the end of each Semester, the Study Board Administrator will make available a report of credits earned by each student to each Course instructor. The individual instructors will then incorporate the information provided by the Study Board Administrator in the assignment of students' grades. Course Instructors may access the credit records through the EMS.

**Failure to complete requirements:** For students in Introduction to Psychology, failure to meet the research requirements fully and on time will result in a grade of *Incomplete* for the course. Completion of the Research Requirement has no bearing on the earned grade. The student must complete the required number of credits in order to have the appropriate letter grade assigned. The completion of remedial credits must be done in a timely manner and in accordance with the University's policy on Incompletes and Grade Changes.

**Resolving Discrepancies:** If, for some reason, there is a discrepancy between the number of credits recorded by the Study Board EMS and the number of credits recorded by the student, the student should contact the Study Board Administrator as soon as possible in order to resolve the difference. The student should check the EMS after each research session in order to verify credit. If credits for a given study are not awarded, the student should contact the researcher for that study before contacting the Study Board Administrator. Any discrepancies must be resolved before the course instructor submits grades.

**Courses other than Introduction to Psychology using the Study Board:**

Other courses in the Department of Psychology or Psychological Sciences may, by the instructor's decision, include a research requirement. These requirements may be satisfied by participation in the Study Board. To do so, an instructor (in a course other than Introduction to Psychology) needs only to notify the Study Board Administrator prior to the start of the semester so that the course may be added to the EMS. The number of required credits may vary depending on the instructor, but all other requirements and policies apply to students in these courses.

The Study Board may also be used as an extra credit vehicle. Instructors in courses wishing to use research participation as a means of extra credit also need to inform the Study Board Administrator at the beginning of each semester. The policies and procedures for students gaining extra credit through research participation differ from standard participation policies. The procedures and policies for extra credit participation are given in a subsequent section of this document.

## **Guidelines For Research Participants**

Because the EMS communicates with students via email, it is the responsibility of each student using the Study Board to use and to maintain an **active WKU email account**. If a student's email account becomes inactive for any reason (e.g., over quota), the student's Study Board account will be deactivated and any pending studies will be canceled.

**Finding a research study in which to participate and signing-up:**

*In order to be eligible for participation in the research studies the student must be at least 18 years old. If a student is not 18 years old, then the student must contact the Study Board Administrator for information about alternatives to research participation.*

Information about opportunities to participate in research studies will be posted on the EMS website ([wku.sona-systems.com](http://wku.sona-systems.com)). Students may then logon to the website to view timeslots for available research. Information on the website will describe the research study, specify the qualifications for volunteering (such as only seniors, college athletes, etc.), the nature of the research, the number of credits offered, the approximate length of time it will take to participate, and the researcher and faculty sponsor of the research.

Once a student has decided to participate in a particular study, the student will sign-up for the study by clicking an available timeslot. An email is then sent to the student as a record of the sign-up. The researcher may either post predetermined time slots from which students may choose or may contact students with available times. **Students MAY NOT sign up for a study more than once, unless the study description explicitly states they may do so. Students will NOT receive credit for redundant participation.**

Notices of research opportunities will be posted during the course of the semester as the researchers become prepared to conduct the studies. Therefore, students should expect that there would be fewer offerings at the start and at the end of the semesters. If there are not enough research studies available, or research opportunities are not available when a student can participate, the student may write research summaries to earn their required credits, or propose an equivalent alternative.

**Required research credits will only be given for studies for which the student signs-up at the EMS website.**

**Showing-up and participating in the study:**

If a student signs-up to participate in a study, the student is asked to show-up on time and be prepared to stay for the posted length of time. If the student is late (even by a few minutes), the study may have begun and the student will not be permitted to enter the research session. If this should occur, it is the student's responsibility to contact the researcher (after the conclusion of the research session).

Information about each current research study will be posted on the EMS website. Information for each study includes the title, time, location, number of credits offered, and researchers' contact information. Students may consult website if they need to contact the experimenter or find when research sessions will take place.

#### **Cancellation:**

If it becomes necessary for the student to cancel participation because of unforeseen circumstances, the student should contact the researcher as soon as possible, so that another participant may be scheduled. Students may cancel a session through the EMS by returning to the timeslot and clicking the "cancel" link. In addition, the student should call or e-mail the researcher at the phone number or e-mail address posted on the website.

#### **Credit for participation:**

After participation in a study, the researcher will record the students' credit on the EMS website. Credits for each student are posted on the EMS website. Students may check their credits against this posting and contact the given researcher if credits are missing. If the discrepancy cannot be resolved, report the problem to the Study Board Administrator. The Study Board Administrator will resolve the discrepancy by consulting the student and researchers involved. The decision of the Study Board Administrator will be final.

#### **Complaints:**

In the advent that a researcher fails to attend a session, that a student believes he has been treated unfairly by a researcher, or that the participants have concerns about any aspect of research participation, the student may submit an official complaint to the Study Board Administrator. Complaints must be type written and signed by the student. The complaint should detail all events that occurred during the research session. In the event that a researcher is absent from a group participation session, only one student needs to submit a complaint form. The Study Board administrator will review the complaint and follow-up with the student.

#### **No-show Policy:**

If a student does not show-up for a scheduled session or if the student is late for the session without notifying the researcher, a "no-show" will be given to the student. No-show behavior inconvenience researchers and other students who could have used the missed session. Thus, classification as a "no-show" will be recorded. There is a limit of two (2) no-shows. After missing two studies the student will be excluded from further participation for the remainder of the semester and immediate cancellation of any other sessions scheduled via the Study Board. The student will only be allowed to earn credit through the alternative assignment.

Students who only participate in Study Board research for *extra* credit (i.e., students not enrolled in Introduction to Psychology) will still be excluded from further participation on the first instance of failing to appear. Excluded students may still obtain research credits via the alternative assignments listed [edtech.wku.edu/~studyboard](http://edtech.wku.edu/~studyboard).

If a student is classified as a **no-show**, the student may appeal this classification within 24 hours of the incident by submitting, via email, a written statement outlining the reason(s) for this behavior to the Study Board Administrator. The no-show classification will be rescinded if the student can provide **documented evidence** for missing the scheduled session *and* failure to notify the researcher.

### **Guidelines For Researchers**

The following guidelines are in place to protect the rights of the participants and must be strictly followed by each researcher using the Study Board. ***Deviations from these guidelines may result in suspension of Study Board privileges for the offending researcher and/or the researcher's supervisor.*** The Study Board Administrator will correct some minor violations of the guidelines. In such cases, the researcher will be notified. Repeated violations will result in written warnings to the researcher. Accumulation of warnings on the part of a researcher will result in suspension of Study Board privileges. Suspension of a researcher is at the discretion of the Study Board Administrator.

#### **Before collecting data:**

1. Each research study must first be approved by the HSRB.
2. Once HSRB approval is secured, the researcher must submit a copy of the approval letter to the Study Board Administrator. The researcher may provide either a hard copy or an electronic copy of the HSRB approval letter.
3. The Study Board Administrator will establish an EMS user account (if needed) for the researcher.
4. Only studies posted on the EMS website may be used for research credit.
5. Specifics of the EMS website use are available at [edtech.wku.edu/~StudyBoard](http://edtech.wku.edu/~StudyBoard)
6. Each researcher must read and follow ALL of the Study Board Guidelines.
7. Researchers should determine how much time their study takes. Pilot testing may be needed to determine how long it takes the average participant to complete a study. Participants from the Study Board may not be used for pilot testing. For each half hour of participation, participants are awarded one (1) credit.
8. The researcher should notify the Study Board Administrator of any restrictions to participation. Restrictions can be included in the pretest required of each participant when the participant initiates a Study Board account.
9. Complete the Study Description page on the EMS website to advertise your study and recruit participants. The researcher must complete all information in the Study Description. The researcher can then add timeslots for the study. No incentive statements (such as "fun experiment" or "only takes 20 minutes") may be included in the Study description.
10. After sign-ups are posted, the researcher should monitor the EMS website daily to determine whether participants were successfully recruited.

#### **During and after the data collection session:**

1. Researchers must give participant the informed consent form (if applicable) to sign and offer the student one to keep, as well.
2. After the study, the researcher will debrief the participants according to HSRB guidelines.
3. Researchers will immediately after the study (or at the first convenient opportunity), log-on the EMS website and grant credit to the participant(s). Credits will be inspected daily by the Study Board Administrator to ensure the researchers are updating the EMS records. Failure to promptly record credit is considered a violation of Study Board policy.

#### **Researcher cancellation:**

1. If a researcher must cancel or reschedule a session, the researcher or appointed agent must notify the participant(s) as soon as possible. Notification can be completed through the EMS website. Cancellation must be made 24 hours in advance of the scheduled session. If a cancellation is made within 24 hours of the research session, participants are entitled to credit for the session.
2. The researcher may also want to notify the Study Board Administrator of the cancellation.
3. Researchers may also attempt to contact participants before the session to reschedule the session (if possible) instead of canceling the session.

### **Study Board Administrator Responsibilities**

The Study Board Administrator is the authority for all procedures associated with research participation. The specific responsibilities of the Study Board Administrator in facilitating research participation are listed here.

1. Maintain user accounts and study information on the EMS website (<http://wku.sona-systems.com>)
2. Disseminate information about the Study Board to the users. Currently, a Study Board website is available for all users to obtain information (<http://edtech.wku.edu/~StudyBoard>)
3. Monitor the timeslots for each study.
4. The Study Board Administrator will make available a final report of participation to each course instructor at the end of the semester. In addition, the Study Board Administrator can provide each instructor with periodic summaries of participation.
5. When a student receives a grade of 'X' in a course due to a failure to complete research requirement, the Study Board Administrator will supervise the completion of the grade. Once the student completes the required research credits, the Study Board Administrator will submit a grade change form in consultation with the student's course instructor.
6. At the beginning of each semester, the Study Board Administrator will be available to attend each course that uses the Study Board to inform the students of the requirements and procedures for research participation.
7. Mediate complaints brought by students.

### **Guidelines for Research Participation for Course Extra Credit**

Students gaining course extra credit through research participation are subject to restrictions on their participation through the STUDY BOARD. Likewise, the procedure for acquiring credit differs from that for students completing mandatory course requirements. Except for these modifications, all other policies for extra-credit students are identical to those previously listed

**Finding a research study in which to participate and signing-up:**

*In order to be eligible for participation in the research studies the student must be at least 18 years old. If a student is not 18 years old, then the student must contact the Study Board Administrator in order to be cleared to participate in research studies.*

Students seeking extra credit through research participation will follow the same guidelines for signing-up as other research participants. Refer to the Guidelines for Research Participants section of this document for specific procedures.

**Showing-up and participating in the study:**

If a student signs-up to participate in a study, the student is asked to show-up on time and be prepared to stay for the posted length of time. If the student is late (even by a few minutes), the study may have begun and the student will not be permitted to enter the experimental session. These students should notify the researcher that they are seeking extra credit so that the researcher will not include their name on the credit form.

**Cancellation:**

Students seeking extra credit through research participation will follow the same guidelines for canceling research appointments as other research participants. Refer to the Guidelines for Research Participants section of this document for specific procedures.

**Credit for participation:**

Students seeking extra credit through research participation will have their Study Board credits reported to the instructor. The instructor will then apply course credit according to her own guidelines.