



Introductory Psychology Research Component 2026-27

Psychology is a data-driven discipline. To learn about how data are gathered and interpreted, all introductory psychology sections include a required research component. This can be fulfilled by participating in or observing research studies and/or reviewing selected research articles. In this class, 6% of the grade is determined by this assignment.

Why am I being asked to participate in human research?

The vast majority of introductory psychology courses at Canadian universities include a research experience component. Why?

- **It can be interesting!** Published surveys have found that students who participated in out-of-class research had more positive perceptions of psychology and interest in research (Bowman & Waite, 2003). Students reported that research participation added variety to the class (Landrum & Chastain, 1994).
- **You might learn something!** Seeing how psychological data are collected firsthand can be a great learning experience, one that you can't get from lectures alone. Students who participated in out-of-class research reported a better understanding of research procedures and generally agreed that the experience helped them learn about psychology (Bowman & Waite, 2003; Landrum & Chastain, 1994; VanWormer et al., 2014). Some even reported it helped them learn about other people or their own psychology (Zannella et al., 2020). A survey of our own UW students conducted several years ago found that >95% of introductory psychology students *strongly* or *moderately* agreed that the research requirement was valuable to their learning.
- **It helps your fellow psychology students!** Honours students in psychology must complete a human research project in their final year, and many of them collect their data using responses from introductory psychology students. Research participation at the intro level helps students in their later degree years. If you are a future honours student, this will also give you a taste of what awaits in your final year!

Do I have to complete research studies?

Is research participation mandatory? No! For good reasons, ethical guidelines for human research in Canada state that participation must be voluntary. This means that you cannot be 'made' to do it, even as part of a course. Instead, you may complete alternatives that also fulfil this course requirement (see below). To be clear, you cannot skip this assignment entirely without consequence—you must do something to earn your grade—but it can be any combination of the activities described below.

How do I get started?

Credits are tracked using a website called SONA. If you're registered in the class, a SONA account will be automatically set up for you. During the first week of classes, your @webmail.uwinnipeg.ca email will receive a message containing your user ID and a temporary password. Once you have this information:

- Visit: <https://uwinnipeg.sona-systems.com/>
- Login and create your own password.
- Complete the pre-screen questionnaire. (More information about this is below.)
- Take note of your SONA ID number, which is a 5-digit identity code. To help preserve confidentiality, you will be known to researchers only by this ID number. You'll need it when participating in any study or when contacting researchers.
- Take note of any available studies you might like. You will want to keep checking back on SONA, because studies will appear here and there throughout the term. SONA will also send automated weekly reminders.

If you do not receive an email with your user ID by the end of the first month of class, contact the SONA Coordinator—see below.

Earning Credits

There are three ways to fulfil the research component. You may choose any combination of the options below to earn your 6.0 credits.

Participation in Online or On-Campus Research Studies

In SONA, you will see a list of studies posted. Clicking on a study title will show you a description of the study (e.g., its purpose & procedures) and any pre-requisites or eligibility requirements (e.g., only men with pet turtles). Studies have variable credit values that correspond to their time commitment, at the rate of 1.0/hour. For example, studies expected to take 30 minutes or less are worth 0.5 of a credit and those expected to take between 31 and 60 minutes are worth 1.0. Some longer or two-part studies are worth more than 1.0 credit, proportional to the expected time required. For on-campus studies, 0.5

extra credit will be provided in appreciation for the extra time associated with in-person participation. Here are some hypothetical study lengths and the corresponding credit that might be allocated:

- An online study taking 30 minutes: 0.5 credits (for 30 minutes' time)
- A lab study taking 30 minutes: 0.5 credits (for 30 minutes' time) + 0.5 (extra for in-person) = 1.0
- A two-part study where one completes a 30-minute online survey first, then attends a 30-minute in-person session: 1.0 credits (for 60 minutes' total time) + 0.5 (extra for in-person) = 1.5

You don't need to do this math yourself; the credit value for a study will always be specified on SONA, along with its estimated time commitment and its location.

Observation of Research Studies

The observer-only option is for students who want to complete and learn about the procedures of a research study but prefer to not have their responses used for research. Observers do everything that active study participants do and receive the same credit. This option is only available for in-person studies. To observe, inform the researcher (in advance or on arrival) that you are opting to complete the procedure but do not want your responses included in the study. Depending on that study's procedures and technical limitations, they might not collect your data or they might delete it immediately after-the-fact.

Journal Article Reviews

In the research assignment course in NEXUS, there are research articles that you can read and review, found as reserved readings. Choose an article and answer three questions using the Review Form in NEXUS. Instructions are on the form. Your review should summarize the research findings in the article and provide evidence from the article. Articles are worth 1.0 credit for each satisfactory review, and graded on a pass/fail basis. The credit for each satisfactory review will be posted on your SONA account. Use of AI tools such as ChatGPT will result in a rejected submission and is also considered academic misconduct that could be reported.

Grading

How does this assignment affect my grade?

The research component is worth 6% of the final grade in all sections of PSYC 1000. To earn the full grade, you must earn 6.0 credits. One credit = 1% of your final grade, in 0.5 credit increments, e.g., if you earn 3.5 credits throughout the course then you will receive 3.5% out of 6%. If you earn 6.0 credits, you will receive the full 6%. Once classes are finished, your requirement results will be reported to your course instructor.

How can I see my current credits?

On your SONA profile, the 'Credits Earned' number is your running total, including both studies and article reviews. The 'Credits Needed' number is the assignment's total credit requirement, not the amount of credits that you still need. The number of credits you still need is the difference between credits earned and credits needed. You will not be able to receive credit twice for the same study.

What if my credit doesn't appear?

If you have completed a study but, after a few days, have not received credit, feel free to contact the researcher listed in SONA so they can investigate. Please include your SONA ID number.

Can I do extra credits?

The SONA system will not cut you off, but there is neither a penalty nor a benefit from accumulating more than 6 credits. Once you have 6.0 credits, you are done and it's best if you leave the spots for others.

Additional Information about the Research Studies Option

SONA Prescreen Questions

Some of the psychology studies conducted this year may recruit specific social groups. For example, someone might want to recruit only women (or only men). When you first register for SONA, there will be 10-15 questions that ask basic information about your identity and background, which may be used to recruit participants for future studies. These questions should take fewer than 5 minutes and are optional, but you must progress through the entire survey to complete your SONA registration by either answering or declining each question.

Answering a prescreen question means that your response will be known to researchers who use that question to recruit for their study. For example, if a researcher selects that only women can participate in a study, they can infer that anyone who signs up answered "woman" on the gender question. If you do not feel comfortable being recruited for a study based on your answer to a question, you should decline to answer it. Prescreen responses will be deleted from the SONA system at the end of the academic year.

Online & In-Person Timeslots

Every SONA study will post "timeslots" where you can sign up. Some timeslots have room for more than one participant. For in-person studies, the timeslot indicates the specific date, time, and location you should attend. For online studies, the timeslot indicates the final deadline for completion; you can complete the study immediately after you sign up, but it must be completed (or cancelled) by the deadline.

Missed Study Appointments

To respect people's time and to not disadvantage other students who could take your spot, please be courteous and cancel appointments that you cannot attend. This includes online studies which include a deadline for study completion, although you can immediately sign up for the study. Cancellation can be done through SONA. After you have logged in, click on "My Schedule and Credits". You will see a table showing your "Study Sign-ups". Click the "cancel" button next to the appointment that you wish to cancel. If the cancellation option is not present or if you prefer, you can also find the researchers' information on the study page and contact them directly. You don't need to give a reason to cancel/remove your signup before the timeslot closes.

Researchers will also try to email participants if a study is cancelled, so please watch for those. Appointment reminders are automatically e-mailed to you the night before your session or, for online studies, before the completion deadline.

If you fail to appear for an in-person study or fail to complete an online study without cancelling or contacting the researcher, you will be marked as an "unexcused no-show". If you acquire 3 unexcused no-shows you will be denied access to further SONA studies. You would retain all earned credits, and still be able to earn credits by submitting article reviews.

If you are late for an in-person appointment it may not be possible to still complete the study at that time. If not, the researcher may be able to cancel your timeslot so that you can sign up again in the future. Latecomers receive neither credit nor a penalty.

Study Eligibility & Preparation

Some studies may be open only to specific people (e.g., pet owners or French speakers). Others might ask for some advance preparation (e.g., wear comfortable clothing or bring a friend). These requirements are always listed on a study's SONA page where you sign up. Please read them! If you attend a study without meeting the stated requirements, it is likely that you will not be allowed to participate and will not receive credit.

Online Study Maximum

To ensure a well-rounded learning experience, a maximum of 3.0 credits may be earned through online studies. Once you have earned 3.0 credits from online studies, the remainder must be earned through in-person options. SONA will prevent you from signing up for any study that would put you over the online limit. This means, for example, that someone who has already earned 2.5 credits online will not be able to sign up for an online study worth 1.0 credits because that would put them above 3.0. They must instead (a) look for an online study worth 0.5 or (b) fulfil the remaining requirement through other means. The online maximum may occasionally be adjusted mid-term on a course-wide basis, based on study availability, but it cannot be adjusted for individuals. The online maximum does not apply to online sections. Article reviews do not count against your online limit.

Other Frequently Asked Questions

Where can I find this information later?

In NEXUS, you should see a separate course called "Research Requirement for Introductory Psychology - PSYC1000." This is in addition to your lecture class section. You can find everything you need to know about this assignment there.

What if I have questions? Who should I ask?

It depends on what type of question.

- Questions about the **research component**, including technical support, should be directed to the SONA coordinator, n.alahakoon@uwinnipeg.ca
- Questions about **individual research studies** should be directed to the researchers; their contact information can be found on the SONA study listing.
- All studies posted on SONA have received ethical review and approval from either the University Human Research Ethics Board (UHREB) or the Psychology Department Ethics Committee (DEC). Questions related to **research ethics** (e.g., unexpected events within a study or other concerns) may be directed to the psychology department research and ethics chair: ethicspsyc@uwinnipeg.ca or to the university ethics officer: ethics@uwinnipeg.ca

How is my information kept confidential?

Because we have to track your signups and credits, you can't be completely anonymous. Instead, you will be assigned a confidential SONA ID number. Researchers will know this ID number but not your name, email, or student number (unless you disclose this to the researcher or within a study itself). At the end of term, SONA Administrator will send your course instructor the number of credits you completed, but not your SONA ID, the names of specific studies, or how those credits were earned. The SONA Administrator has no access to research data. The Department Ethics Chair has separate access to both SONA administration and the research data of their own studies; this is necessary to fulfil their dual duties. They will not link the two datasets.

When do I start and finish this assignment?

We suggest you start looking at SONA as soon as possible! If you log into SONA and don't see studies, there may be none available at the moment or timeslots are currently full. Please keep checking—more studies will appear!

- All research credits must be earned by:
 - Fall condensed section: **Monday, December 7, 2026**
 - Fall-Winter sections: **Tuesday, April 6, 2027**
- Article reviews received by this date will be reviewed, and credits or the status of your submission will be posted to SONA or your NEXUS profile. Reviews submitted

after the dates below are not guaranteed feedback, but all submissions will be reviewed:

- Fall condensed section: **Tuesday, December 1, 2026**
- Fall-Winter sections and Winter condensed section: **Thursday, April 1, 2027**

Selection of Journal Articles for Reviews

1. Berridge et al., C. W. (2016). Liking, wanting, and the incentive-sensitization theory of addiction. *American Psychologist*, 71, 670–679.
2. Dolinski, D. et al (2017). Would you deliver an electric shock in 2015? Obedience in the experimental paradigm developed by Stanley Milgram in the 50 years following the original studies. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 8, 1-7.
3. Fredrickson, B. (2003). The value of positive emotions: The emerging science of positive psychology is coming to understand why it's good to feel good. *American Scientist*, 91, 330-335.
4. Haslam, N. (2015). Biogenetic explanations of mental disorder: The mixed-blessings model. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 24, 399–404.
5. Melzack, R. (1992, April). Phantom limbs. *Scientific American*, 120-126.
6. Nairne, J. S. et al. (2017). Remembering the living: Episodic memory is tuned to animacy. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 26, 22 –27.
7. Rapp, D. M. (2016). The consequences of reading inaccurate information. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 25, 281-285.
8. Lilienfeld, S. O. et al. (2009). Giving debiasing away: Can psychological research on correcting cognitive errors promote human welfare? *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 4, 390-398.
9. Soto, C. J. et al. (2015). Personality traits in childhood and adolescence: Structure, development, and outcomes. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 24, 358–362.
10. Steele, C. M. (1999, August). Thin ice: "Stereotype threat" and Black college students. *The Atlantic Monthly*, 44-54.

References

- Bowman, L. L., & Waite, B. M. (2003). Volunteering in research: Student satisfaction and educational benefits. *Teaching of Psychology*, 30(2), 102–106.
https://doi.org/10.1207/S15328023TOP3002_03

- Landrum, R. E., & Chastain, G. (1995). Experiment spot-checks: A method for assessing the educational value of undergraduate participation in research. *IRB: Ethics and Human Research*, 17(4), 4. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3564152>
- VanWormer, L. A., Jordan, E. F., & Blalock, L. D. (2014). Assessing the perceived value of research participation. *Teaching of Psychology*, 41(3), 233–236. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0098628314537974>
- Zannella, L., Vahedi, Z., & Want, S. (2020). What do undergraduate students learn from participating in psychological research? *Teaching of Psychology*, 47(2), 121–129. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0098628320901379>