

A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO PARTICIPANT RESEARCH AT THE SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY AND NEUROSCIENCE

The following is a guide for **all** research projects (staff, UG and PG) involving human adult participants. (There is a separate document on SharePoint covering research with children.) You will need to consult your supervisor at every step of the research process. For additional information, please contact the relevant person listed at the end of the document.

PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

Study Type

Decide with your supervisor whether it is most appropriate for you to use a lab, field or online study.

Lab Study: Lab studies are conducted at a designated time in a controlled environment, typically in one of the School of Psychology and Neuroscience buildings at the University.

Field Study: Field studies are those in which data collection occurs outside the University. Field sites can range from external organisations in the town of St Andrews to locations outside the country.

Online Study: Online studies are conducted over the internet and can be completed by participants anywhere they have access to a device with an internet connection. They may be subject to reduced requirements for the provision of separate Consent and Debrief forms (see the UTREC policy at <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/utrec/guidelinespolicies/onlinesurveysandquestionnaires/>). Researchers wishing to collect online survey data should use the Qualtrics system unless its use is not viable for their project.

To access Qualtrics, visit the following page, <https://standrews.eu.qualtrics.com>, which will verify your St Andrews single sign-on details and create an account for you. If your supervisor wishes to access your survey and data, please ask him or her to create the questionnaire using their own account and give you full collaboration access.

Participant Reimbursement

Decide with your supervisor how participants should be reimbursed for participating in your study. Participants can volunteer their time, be entered into a free draw, or be reimbursed monetarily for their time.

Volunteering Time: Participants receive neither monetary reimbursement nor entry to a free draw. In this case, skip Step 5 below.

Prize Draw: All participants are entered into a draw for a chance to win an Amazon gift voucher. This option is strongly recommended for shorter lab studies. Prize limits are calculated as £1 per participant and capped at £50 per gift voucher. For example, if your study requires 60 participants, the draw could offer the chance to win one of two £30 Amazon vouchers, the chance to win one of four £15 Amazon vouchers, or the chance to win one of six £10 Amazon vouchers. The Amazon vouchers are only

available to UK residents. If a voucher fails to be redeemed after 3 months (and a second email sent) then the voucher will be withdrawn.

Monetary Reimbursement for in-person studies: Under the School's RESPAY reimbursement system, participants can be offered compensation for their time in the following increments: £2 for up to 15 minutes; £3 for up to 30 minutes; £4 for up to 45 minutes; and £5 for up to an hour. These increments can be combined e.g. a study taking 90 minutes would offer monetary reimbursement of £8. Total monetary reimbursement for senior honours and taught postgraduate projects is capped at £300 (equivalent to 60 participant hours per project). Total reimbursement for research postgraduate projects (e.g. PhD, Msc by Research) is capped at £300 per student per academic year either for a single study or across more than one study. Participants must be reimbursed for the amount stated in the Ethics Application (see Step 1 below) regardless of how long they take to complete the study. You may change the study time at any point of data collection with an Ethical Amendment.

If conducting an fMRI or TMS study, speak with your supervisor regarding the amount your participants should be reimbursed. The hourly reimbursement rate for these studies is generally £10 per hour and you may also wish to provide additional participant travel costs at a flat rate of £10 if they are required to travel to locations outside St Andrews to participate. Your supervisor will also inform you about how best to coordinate this reimbursement.

Monetary Reimbursement for online studies: The School's RESPAY reimbursement system is not appropriate for online studies. For online studies, alternative reimbursement systems such as Prolific and Pure Profile may be appropriate. Speak with your supervisor about whether reimbursement for online studies is necessary and, if so, which platform would be most appropriate.

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

Step 1: Obtaining Ethical Approval

Your study procedure and materials must be approved by the Psychology and Neuroscience Ethics Committee (SEC) before you can begin data collection. Psychology and Neuroscience-specific information relating to ethics applications is available on the School webpages: <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/psychology/ethics/>

To obtain ethics approval, the following materials should be sent to psyethics@st-andrews.ac.uk attached as *one* Word or PDF document:

- Ethics Application Form.
Ensure that your supervisor reads and adds their signature to the completed form.
- Consent Form, Information Sheet, Debriefing Form, and any Study Advertisements used in data collection. Template documents which must be used are available on the [UTREC](#) webpage online.
- All relevant study materials, including copies of measures/scales, protocols, and permissions to access field sites. For online studies, these may include screengrabs of your online materials.

If you have any questions about any of these documents, please consult your supervisor first. If your supervisor cannot answer your questions, email the School Ethics Administrator, Helen Sunderland (psyethics@st-andrews.ac.uk).

The Psychology and Neuroscience Ethics Committee meets fortnightly during term time (less frequently at other times). Meeting dates and submission deadlines for each meeting are available on the School Ethics Page. All application materials must be submitted prior to the deadline for the application to be considered at any given ethics meeting.

The Ethics Committee often asks researchers to revise some part of their Ethics Application. If you are asked to revise your application, address all revision suggestions fully and email the revised version of your document, with amendments **highlighted in yellow**, to psyethics@st-andrews.ac.uk for reconsideration.

The Ethics Committee will grant ethical approval for your study once the members are satisfied that you have addressed the relevant concerns. You will receive an Ethics Approval Letter, which should be appended to your project, dissertation or thesis, and an Ethics Approval Code, which must be entered into the SONA system, as outlined in Step 2.

It is strongly recommended that Senior Honours project Ethics Applications are submitted for consideration by the Ethics Committee by *the first meeting of Semester 2 at the very latest*.

SPECIAL POPULATIONS: Additional ethical approval from the Health Research Authority (HRA) is required if your study involves any of the following:

- using NHS facilities or gaining access to NHS staff or patients;
- working with adults lacking capacity to consent for themselves (if identified via the NHS);
- exposure to ionising radiation;
- investigating medical products;
- research involving midwifery;
- processing confidential patient information with or without consent;
- using human material containing or made from cells (unless obtained from the Tissue Bank).

If your study involves any other governmental organisation, or if your study involves participants under 16 years of age, you should be aware that there are additional procedures for obtaining ethical approval. Please discuss these additional approvals and procedures with your supervisor.

Step 2: Participant Recruitment

The SONA system facilitates recruitment of participants. Studies posted to the SONA website can be viewed by St Andrews students and members of the St Andrews community who have registered for a participant account. This is a quick and efficient way for most researchers to recruit participants for their studies. (The SONA system is unlikely to be helpful if you are recruiting participants for a field study.)

To obtain a SONA system researcher account, email psychsona@st-andrews.ac.uk with the following information: your full name; your St Andrews email address; the name of your supervisor and the reason you require a researcher account (e.g. Senior Honours honours project, MSc or MRes project etc.).

Once you receive your account information, login to <http://st-andrews.sona-systems.com>. Click on 'Add New Study'. You should select one from the following three study types: a standard study; a two-part standard study; or an online external study.

Standard Study: Appropriate for lab studies requiring each participant to attend only once.

Two-Part Standard Study: Appropriate for lab studies requiring each participant to attend twice.

When creating a two-part study, you may specify a time-window for part 2 relative to part 1 (e.g. part 2 must take place within 7 to 10 days of part 1). Participants sign up for part 1 and part 2 at the same time so you must ensure there are timeslots available for both sessions, otherwise participants will be prevented from signing up at all. If participants cancel part 1, part 2 is automatically cancelled. If they cancel only part 2 and part 1 has already occurred, should they wish to reschedule part 2, you should manually arrange it.

Online External Study: Appropriate for online studies (do not select *Online Survey Study* – this option is only appropriate for surveys hosted on the SONA system). You will need your study URL. Note that external studies are typically setup on SONA such that there is one timeslot and that timeslot contains the maximum number of participants you require and deadline by which they must have participated. Setting up multiple timeslots for an external study confuses participants and is not recommended.

NOTES FOR ALL STUDIES:

- For all study types, select the 'paid' option (not 'credit'). If you are recruiting participants on a volunteer basis, enter £0 under 'Payment'.
- If you are using a free draw, make sure to state the amount of the draw clearly under 'Detailed Description' and write "CHANCE TO WIN £XX" under 'Payment'.
- Most lab studies will ask participants to meet the researcher in the Psychology building foyer. This ensures that participants do not get lost in the Psychology and Neuroscience building.
- The 'Study Name,' 'Brief Abstract' and 'Detailed Description' should NOT deviate from the Study Advertisement wording that was approved as part of your Ethics Application.
- Enter the approval code you received from the Ethics Committee under 'UTREC Approval Code (optional)'. This is not optional.
- Make sure to click on '[Send a Request]' to have your study approved by the SONA Administrator. Once you receive the approval email from the administrator, you may make the study 'active', at which point participants will be able to view and sign up for your study.

Step 3: Booking a Lab and Allowing Participants to Sign up

If your supervisor has access to dedicated lab space, consult with him or her about arranging to run your study there. If your supervisor does not have a lab, you may use the Jeeves Labs. To access the Jeeves Labs, you should go to the School Office with your Student ID Card and arrange that your card be given access privileges. (Note that the Jeeves Labs are only available from 9am-5pm Monday to Friday. Outside these hours, your card will not gain you access. You should not plan to work beyond 5pm. The [Jeeves Labs Policy](#) document will give you further information.

If you intend to test vulnerable participants or anticipate for any reason that you could require additional support during testing, you may wish to book Room 1.32. This room has a bell which rings in the School Office and offers immediate support from staff, should it be required.

If you are using the Jeeves Labs, or have requested access to Room 1.32 or the Social Immersion Suite in Rms 1.57-1.59, you should book your room a few days in advance using the Online Room Booking System. To gain access to the Online Room Booking System, contact Ken Munro (kjm@st-andrews.ac.uk), informing him of which rooms you wish to be able to book. The Online Room Booking System is available at: <https://psyneuro-room-booking.st-andrews.ac.uk>. It is directly accessible on the University network. If you wish to access it from outside the university network (e.g. from home), you should use the VPN (see <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/itsupport/network/networkservices/remotearchive/>). You can book rooms in one hour slots from 9am-5pm, only up to two weeks in advance. Do not book more than 5 consecutive hours during busy times so that other researchers have fair access to the lab rooms. If for any reason, you do not need to use rooms you have booked, please delete your booking.

Once you have booked a testing room, you may then allow participants to sign up for your study on SONA. Log back into SONA and select "View/Administer Time Slots" to add timeslots. For example, if you have booked a room in the Jeeves Labs for Monday from 1-5pm and your study is 45 minutes long, add 4 timeslots from 13:00 with 15 minutes free time between slots so that you have ample time to meet students in the Psychology building foyer and take them to the Jeeves Labs.

Step 4: Participant Reimbursement

Monetary Reimbursement using RESPAY system: Monetary reimbursement for participation is carried out using payment slips. In short, you provide each participant with a payment slip for the amount stated in your Ethics Application, which they exchange for cash at the School Office. This is explained in more detail below.

Prior to data collection, obtain payment slips for your study from the School Office. You must ensure that each payment slip is completed with: (a) your Ethics Approval Code; (b) the amount to be paid; and (c) your supervisor's signature. Remember to give your supervisor plenty of time to sign the slips prior to starting your research. If you are a postgraduate, ask your supervisor if the project is funded by a grant, and if so, complete the grant code line. Once signed by your supervisor, you should collect the slips from the School Office and complete one for each of your participants immediately after they have

finished the study. Once you have the payment slips in your possession, they are your responsibility. If you lose any payment slip, please contact your supervisor and Karen Rae (psyfinance@st-andrews.ac.uk) immediately and report the number of payment slips lost. It is extremely important that you keep them safe.

After a participant has completed your study and has been fully debriefed, you should sign their payment slip and fill it out with the participant's name and Student ID number (or home address if they are a member of public). Participants should present completed payment slips with their Student ID Card to the School Office on Wednesdays from noon to 4.30pm where it can be exchanged for cash. Participants who are not St Andrews students may exchange their payment slips for cash at any time during working hours.

Free Draw: The free draw should be carried out only after data collection for your study is complete. Jacqueline MacPherson (jm5@st-andrews.ac.uk) is responsible for carrying out draws. Do not carry out the draw yourself. Contact Jacqueline with the full list of participants, emails, the number and denomination of prizes to be drawn along with notification of where the voucher should be charged to. Jacqueline will then select the winner(s) using a random generator and send them each an Amazon voucher of the designated amount.

Step 5: Data Collection for Lab Studies

Protocols for lab-based data collection vary considerably depending on the type of experimental design, research topic, and materials used. The following are general guidelines applicable to most data collection procedures conducted at the School. Again, please discuss with your supervisor for the specific protocol for your study.

- Prior to meeting your participant in the Psychology and Neuroscience Building, ensure that your lab room is ready and your materials are set up. You should have either an electronic or paper copy of the Information Sheet and Consent Form ready for the participant to read and sign.
- Make sure you are not late in meeting your participants. If the participant is late, wait at least 10 minutes. You may have to refuse their participation or reschedule them if there is no longer enough time for them to take part in the study.
- Accompany the participant to the lab and ask them to turn off/silence their mobile phone. Present them with the Information Sheet and the Consent Form. You must not begin the study until the participant has signed the Consent Form.
- Once they have signed the Consent Form, you may begin your study. Note that participants have the right to skip over any part of your study and still be fully reimbursed for participation (unless you have explicitly stated otherwise in the approved Ethics Application).
- Once the study is finished, provide participants with the Debriefing Form and answer any questions they have about your study. Make sure to reimburse them at this point (see Step 4).
- Once the participant has left, log-into SONA, click "View/Administer Timeslots," click on "Modify" and select "Participated" to record that the participant showed up and took part in your study.

- If a participant fails to attend without justification, log-into SONA, click “View/Administer Timeslots,” click on “Modify” and select “Unexcused No-Show” in SONA. If the participant provides you with a justification for their absence, select “Excused No-Show”.
- If you wish to change the protocol at any stage of data collection, you must submit an Ethical Amendment to the Ethics Committee for approval. This form can be found on the UTREC ethics pages.
- Communicate with your supervisor during the entire process of data collection, informing them of any issues that may arise.

Step 6: Corresponding with participants over email

Your study may require that you correspond with participants over email. If you have declared in your Ethics Application and Consent Form that participants’ personal data is anonymous and/or confidential, you could be in breach of Ethics, and breaking GDPR laws, if you send a mass email to all participants that reveals other participants’ email addresses.

To minimise the chances of Ethics or GDPR violations:

- Send individual emails if this is practical.
- Write emails in draft and only add recipients once you are certain you wish to send them.
- To email large groups, use mail merge. If you require training in mail merge, your supervisor and/or CAPOD may be able to help.
- If possible, avoid sending emails to groups using Blind Carbon Copy (BCC). It is very easy to mistakenly use the Carbon Copy (CC) field instead of the BCC field, which would lead to the disclosure of all email addresses to all recipients.

These precautions are particularly important as any complaint made to the University about a data breach must be formally investigated. This could result in the breach being reported to the Information Commissioner, who has powers to impose fines of up to £500,000.

If you are aware of any complaint regarding a data breach, please do not respond before you take advice from the Head of School.

Step 7: Managing your data

Research funders increasingly require that data from research they fund be deposited in a data repository. If your research is externally funded or you are on an externally funded studentship, check with your funder what they require of your data. This is something you should consider from the outset of project planning as this information will be needed to adequately complete the data management section of your Ethics Application.

Step 8: Closing your study

After you have completed data collection, you should close your study. In closing your study, you must follow all steps outlined in your Ethics Application. In addition:

- Make the study “inactive” on SONA. Participants are unable to see inactive studies.
- Give your supervisor all of the Consent Forms obtained from your study. Your supervisor will store them in accordance with the data management section in your approved ethics application.
- Ethical approval is given for 5 years. After that time you cannot collect further data without a full application, even if your rationale has not changed.
- Remember that your ethical approval document should be bound to all associated written work assessed for your degree.

CONTACTS

Your first point of contact should always be your supervisor. In the event that you and your supervisor decide that it is appropriate to contact someone for more information, the following list should be consulted.

Ethical Approval and general queries	Helen Sunderland (psyethics@st-andrews.ac.uk)
Fieldwork	Shona Deigman (psyscman@st-andrews.ac.uk)
Qualtrics	Ken Mavor (ken.mavor@st-andrews.ac.uk)
SONA System	Toni Ellen (psychsona@st-andrews.ac.uk)
Online Room Booking System	Ken Munro (kjm@st-andrews.ac.uk)
Participant Reimbursement	Karen Rae (psyfinance@st-andrews.ac.uk)
Free Draws	Jacqueline MacPherson (jm5@st-andrews.ac.uk)
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