

## HOW TO BE A RESEARCH PARTICIPANT (Revised Spring 2015)

If your instructor has decided to offer credit or extra credit for research participation, you can earn credit by participating in studies available through the Cal Poly Pomona Human Subjects Pool, Sona Systems, a web-based system for matching participants with studies needed volunteers. A variety of studies are offered each quarter, at different times. Many appointments will appear around sixth week and studies will continue to post appointments until the end of the quarter. Because ethics require that participation be freely chosen, your instructor will also offer an alternative way of earning credit. Contact your instructor if you do not wish to participate in research but wish to earn extra credit in an alternative way.

**Prescreening Questionnaire:** Many studies require participants to determine their eligibility by completing a Prescreening Questionnaire. This questionnaire is short (less than 20 multiple choice question) and usually asks you demographic information and yes/no format questions. If you do not complete the Prescreening Questionnaire, you may become ineligible for some studies. You will be asked to complete the Prescreening Questionnaire the first time you login to the Sona System. If you have used the system before you will not be asked to complete the questionnaire. If you want to redo the questionnaire each quarter to make sure you are eligible for all possible studies, email the system administrator, Dr. Nancy Alvarado ([nalvarado@cpp.edu](mailto:nalvarado@cpp.edu)) and request that your Prescreening Questionnaire be reset. Note that **no credits** are awarded for the Prescreening Questionnaire because it takes no more than 2 minutes to complete.

### How to Sign Up

Signing up for studies is done on-line: <https://cpp.sona-systems.com/>. You can use any computer with internet access to sign up, select courses and assign credit, change or cancel your appointments.

1. If you have never used Sona before, you will need to create a logon and password. Follow the instructions for doing so on the website. Once your logon has been activated by using it at least once, it will remain active as long as you are at Cal Poly Pomona.
2. Students who have forgotten their password can have it sent to them again using the “Lost Your Password?” link on the main logon webpage. This may be important if you already enrolled in our system a while ago but haven’t used your account recently.
3. Before you can sign up for an appointment, you must create a list of the courses you are enrolled in, so that you can assign your credits. To do this, log in, then select the “My Profile” link at the top of the screen. (Using “My Profile,” you can also change your password and enter an optional telephone number or an additional email address.) At the bottom of the profile screen there is a link that says “Change Courses.” When you click on it, a list of the available courses appears. Highlight each course you wish to select. **(Use the CTRL key to select multiple courses.)** Remember to click on “Update” to save your selection. Later, when you schedule appointments, you will be able to assign your

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credit to the courses you have selected. After you have earned credits, you can also reassign them to different courses. The deadline for assigning credits is Friday of 10<sup>th</sup> week.

4. To sign up for a study or experiment, click on the “Studies” link at the top of the page. You can search for studies by date (to fit your schedule), or click on “View All Studies” to see a list of all studies with available appointment times. Click on the name of the study or the “Timeslots Available” link to find out more about the study. To sign up, first select the course (just one) that you wish to assign your credit to, then click on the “Sign Up” button. Be sure to copy down the location and time of the study. (You will also be sent a reminder, but it may not contain the location, contact info or other details.) After you participate, your course instructor will be notified that you earned credit for being in that study at the end of the quarter. You will receive an email confirmation for each appointment you sign up for.
5. You will also receive an email reminder 24 hours before the appointment. It is your responsibility to cancel appointments that you cannot attend, at least one hour before the appointment time (although some studies have different cancellation deadlines, e.g., 24 hours). **If you fail to show up and do not cancel your appointment by the study deadline, you will be given an “unexcused no- show”.** Although the unexcused no-show does not affect your total number of credits, you are limited to **two unexcused no-shows each quarter.** If you exceed two unexcused no-shows, your account will be frozen and you will not be able to participate in studies for the remainder of the quarter. Repeat offenders will have their accounts permanently terminated. You may be able to remove an unexcused no-show by rescheduling your appointment for the same study, at the discretion of the experimenter (researcher).
6. Researchers are expected to give you advance notice if they must cancel an appointment. If a researcher cancels the appointment (up to one hour before), no credit will be given and you should sign up for a different experiment (or reschedule another time for that same study). If the researcher does not show up and failed to cancel the appointment at least an hour in advance, you will automatically be given credit for participation. Contact the System Administrator if this does not happen. **Make sure your email mailbox does not become full -- important messages may be bounced by the system.** Make sure your email address is correct in the system. Delete mail, check your SPAM folder, or contact the Cal Poly help desk if you are not getting email.
7. **You must assign each credit earned to a particular class.** Each credit can only be counted for one course. You can change credit assignments at any time up until the last day of class during the quarter. The last day to make changes to credit assignments is 5 PM of the last day of classes (Friday of 10<sup>th</sup> week). **It is a good idea to check your assignments during the last week of classes.** No changes can be made by students during Finals week or after instruction has ended. This time is needed to prepare reports for instructors so that they can calculate student grades.

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8. Select the “My Schedules/Credits” link from the top of the page to review your scheduled appointments, change course selections, change credit assignments, and change or cancel appointments.
9. You have rights as a research participant. The researcher should provide you with a copy of the Informed Consent Form and should debrief you at the end of the study regarding the nature of the research. If you feel you were not treated ethically or you were not given informed consent or were not debriefed, please contact the Sona System Administrator, Dr. Nancy Alvarado, at [nalvarado@cpp.edu](mailto:nalvarado@cpp.edu)

### **IMPORTANT:**

As a participant in psychological or sociological research, you have the right to leave a study at any time if you wish to do so, without penalty. If you object to participation, or if there is a shortage of studies posted during the quarter, your instructor has provided you with an alternate assignment or way of earning credit. Contact your instructor for more information.